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# ALL AROUND WEEKLY.

## THE YOUNG CLIFF CLIMBER

By ED KING.

Raymond saw his friends. As the condor seemed about to attack him again, Loja discharged a second arrow. This time the condor's heart was reached.

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# ALL AROUND WEEKLY

## CONTAINING STORIES OF ALL KINDS

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# THE YOUNG CLIFF CLIMBER

OR,

## A TALE OF THE ANDES

By ED KING

### CHAPTER I.

THE SILVER MINES OF CERRO DE PASCO IN THE ANDES.

Peru was conquered and explored by the early Spaniards, under the belief that it was El Dorado, the land of gold; but it much better deserves the name of La Plata, for its Andes abound in silver.

One of the most famous mines in the great chain of the Andes is that of Cerro de Pasco, sixty miles from Lima, in the heart of the vast and almost untrodden fastnesses of the bleak cliffs, wild forests, and desert tablelands, that go to form the mountain range.

The settlement of Cerro de Pasco is a wild, rude collection of primitive dwellings, constructed of adobe and thatch, with here and there a building boasting of some approach to European construction. Its inhabitants are Spaniards in a minority and Indians, the natives of the Andes, and in many cases descendants from the ancient race of "sun worshipers," or the Incas and the peons, generally halfbreeds, who are the servants, or more properly to all intents the slaves of South America.

There are some Indians among the servants, or peons, whom circumstances have reduced to serfdom, but they do not usually predominate.

On the morning of which we are writing, in one of the better class of dwellings at the silver mines of Cerro de Pasco, one that betrayed unmistakable evidences of European or American architecture in its construction, sat an American gentleman of about fifty years of age, whose resolute, intelligent face and general air bespoke the man of business and the possessor of executive ability.

This man is Archibald Anderson, the American speculator, who is largely interested in the mines of Cerro de Pasco, and whose means has aided in developing their hidden wealth.

A childless man is the American, and he has lived a lonely life here in the heart of the Andes until a few months prior to the opening of our story. In the year 1868, his nephew, Raymond Anderson, the son of a brother residing in the State of New York, came to spend a year with his uncle in the Andes.

Archibald Anderson is engaged in looking over some papers, when there comes a knock at the door, and in answer to his invitation a swarthy Spaniard enters.

Brigandish is the appearance of this man, attired in the half-Indian and half-civilized garb, so much affected by the Castilian mountaineers.

Upon his head is a broad felt hat, and he wears a poncho striped like an Arab's blanket, and slashed velvet breeches, while from the folds of his rich, red scarf wound about his loins protrude the favorite navaja—Spanish knife—and the butts of a brace of pistols.

A fierce mustache, flashing black eyes, and a mouth which reveals a row of pearl-white teeth in a rather unpleasant way, are the striking features of the Spaniard's face.

"Ah, Garcia Cuino, you are prompt. Is the silver train laden in readiness to depart for Lima with the month's products of the mines?" asked Anderson.

"Si, senor. All is ready, and I have come for the bill of lading addressed to the National Bank of Lima," replied the Spaniard.

"The papers are in readiness. Here they are," responded the American, placing some documents in the hands of the Spaniard.

"You are responsible for a great trust, Cuino. Thousands of dollars will be under your protection all the way to Lima. How strong a guard of armed mountaineers have you to accompany the train of mules and their attendant peons?" added the American.

"Twenty, senor, and the peons are thirty in number, with as many pack-mules to carry the silver. Fear nothing, Garcia Cuino has made the trip before, as you know, and all has been well," said the Spaniard, who spoke English quite perfectly.

The man spoke the truth. He had been in the employ of the American mine operator of Cerro de Pasco two years, but, although he had never betrayed a trust in the mind of Archibald Anderson, a doubt as to the stability and uprightness of his honesty had arisen.

Cuino had a black page in his history, it had been whispered to the American, but what it was he had never been fully able to learn.

Once a Spanish rover visited the mines, and upon beholding Cuino, addressed him by another name than that by which he was known to the American.

The stranger had asked for an interview with Anderson, saying that he had some important information to communicate regarding the man Cuino, and the American named an hour when he would be at liberty to hear him.

Strange to say, the unknown Spaniard never kept the appointment, and he disappeared from Cerro de Pasco that very day.

Cuino, when not engaged as commander of the "silver transports," as the mule trains employed in packing the products of the mines across the mountains were called, was an overseer or taskmaster in the mines, and his cruelty to the peons under him was terrible, although he kept the knowledge of his doings from Anderson.

The peon-miners feared to complain for they stood in terror of the Spaniard, who in common with the descendants of the conquerors of Peru, regarded the natives as little better than brutes.

Archibald Anderson was silent for a time after the Spaniard last spoke, and he reflected what an immense loss, what a terrible calamity in a financial point of view, any treachery on the part of the man to whom he was about to intrust the conduct of the silver-train might entail.

"I await your commands, senor," said Cuino, presently, as he shifted about from one foot to the other in an uneasy way, which might almost have led one to suppose he suspected what was passing in the other's mind, and was troubled thereby.

Before Archibald Anderson could reply the door opened, and a handsome youth of eighteen, who was, as one could see at a glance, an American, entered.

This was Raymond Anderson, the American silver miner's nephew.

Close behind him followed a young colored man of very strong and compact build, and with a face as black as the ace of spades, but beaming with good-nature.

The darkey was Hamlet Hamilton by name, and Raymond Archibald had brought him with him from the United States.

Raymond was a devoted student of botany, natural history, and geology. It was his wish to enrich his knowledge of these sciences, and since his arrival in the Andes the young American had been at the bottom of the mine in search of "specimens." He had also ranged the forests and traversed portions of the mountain-side, where, to reach some object of his desire or ambition, he had more than once risked life and limb in scaling cliffs of dizzy height.

The natives called him "The Cliff-climber," and although his deeds even now deserved the title, they were as nothing compared to what he was yet to be called upon to accomplish in the way of cliff-climbing.

The time was coming when not desire of possession or ambition would prompt his efforts, but a more awful impulse—the necessity to climb the dizzy cliffs of immense mountains in order to save his life.

"Oh, uncle," cried Raymond Anderson, as soon as he found himself in the presence of the latter, "you promised me that I should accompany the silver-train to Lima, and now it seems they were about to depart thus early in the morning, while I was left to sleep and miss the opportunity I have so longed for. Surely you do not mean to disappoint me, uncle?"

"I have thought that I ought not to expose you to what may be the peril of a dangerous journey. The way to Lima

is infested with robbers, and besides the human foes there are others, which you would not find it pleasant to meet. You had best think better of the matter, my boy, for, if any misfortune were to befall you, I should never forgive myself, and your parents would never pardon me," replied Archibald Anderson.

"I fear nothing. I have my good American rifle and my revolvers. Then, too, Ham here will accompany me, and besides, there is a strong guard to accompany the train—isn't there, Mr. Cuino?"

Raymond turned to the Spaniard, who, thus appealed to, replied:

"To be sure there is. We can protect all."

"I must go, uncle. I must see the strange animals, the mighty birds, the remarkable trees, and all the wonders of the Andes. Do not disappoint me."

"Well, well, I don't know as I ought to do so. Cuino will have a special care for you, and Ham, as you call your colored man, will be always ready to stand by you at a moment of peril."

"Then you consent, uncle?"

"Yes."

"Thank you—thank you. Now to conclude my preparations for the journey."

With these words, the delighted youth flew out of the room, followed by Ham.

Cuino followed him with his eyes, and there was an expression of uneasiness upon his face, and something of disappointment, too.

"I have no further instructions, Cuino. You know your duty, and I rely upon you to do it. Watch over and protect the boy, and as you deal with him so may fate deal with you," said Archibald Anderson.

"Have no fears. I have that upon my person which is dearer to me than life. See, senor?" the Spaniard said, and as he spoke he drew from his pocket a bleached parchment, folded like the pages of a book. "I mean this shall make me a wealthy man some day," he added.

Half an hour later Raymond Anderson said good-by to his uncle, and Garcia Cunio shouted adios! as the mule-train started from the mines.

Archibald Anderson watched it until the last mule disappeared, and the sound of the tinkling bell on the neck of each little animal died away in the distance.

Returning to his office he saw a piece of bark lying upon the floor under the open window. The mine operator picked it up, and examined it with scrutiny.

It was an Indian's writing, and the American could not make it out, but calling an Indian hunter he heard it read as follows:

"Danger threatens the American youth. If he goes with the silver-train he will never return."

Was there truth in this mysterious warning?

Was the young cliff climber going to his doom?

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE JOURNEY AMONG THE ANDES.

In a single file, each mule led by a peon, the silver train wound away through the mountains.

Where the path was wide enough the Spanish guards marched beside the mule train.

In many cases this was impracticable, and then the guards divided, a portion of the band preceding and the remainder following the train.

The route of the silver train soon ran through a seemingly impenetrable forest, where branches crossing overhead produced a delightful shade.

Raymond Anderson was delighted already. The curious forms of tropical life were all attractive to one who had just come from an American city.

As Raymond was somewhat of a naturalist, his pleasure was increased by the food for study and observation about him.

The superb banana extended luxuriantly its green leaves eight feet in length; the slender bamboo shot upward, straight as an arrow; and many species of palm bore aloft their feathery heads, inexpressibly light and elegant.

On the branches of independent trees sat the parasitic orchid and countless creeping plants, with long, flexible stems twined around the tree-trunks like serpents, or forming gigantic loops and coils among the limbs.

Beneath the tall trees boundless varieties of ferns attracted the eye by their beautiful patterns.

Raymond and Ham, the colored man, were in the rear of the train, and the young American found so much to examine and admire that he frequently lagged behind the train, much to the annoyance of Ham.

"Look yeah, Mars Raymond, didn't yah uncle tole yer before we started to look out fer yerseff? S'pose now some ob dem robbers we's hern ob were to come swoopin' down on yer, what yer do then if yer found yerseff cut off from de train, eh?" the darkey said.

Raymond good-humoredly acknowledged that the situa-

tion hinted at would be a perilous one, and gratified Ham by hastening after the train.

After a time the ascent of a mountain was begun, and the way became difficult.

The sun could not penetrate the dense forest, and a chilling gloom was on the trail where rocks towered aloft and steep declivities yawned close to the feet.

Finally a rocky staircase was reached, and as the mules which the boy and his colored companion rode began to ascend, Ham exclaimed:

Ough! Ough! I 'clar to gracious, I'se done broke my shin or cracked de rock, I don't know which. If I ever git back to New York, I'll stay dar. No moah foolishness like dis fer me."

The fact was, the rocks were so steep that one must throw up his legs to save them from being crushed.

Raymond's mule reared and for a moment or so mule and rider seemed in imminent danger of turning a back somersault down the stairs.

After this followed a fearful ride along where the trail lay upon the verge of a precipice, and then through defiles and passes.

The wild chaos of the mountains on every side, the profound ravines, the heaps of ruins, all impressed the young American.

The mountain scenery of the Andes is grand—grander than the Alps.

As the silver train wound out of the rugged way upon an elevated plateau, like a miniature pampas, the majestic dome of Chimborazo was visible in the distance, its snow-clad summit untrodden by man, towering twice as high as Mount Etna.

Chimborazo was for many years considered the highest mountain in the world, but now Aconcagua of Chili claims that honor.

A little later Raymond recognized among the trees the celebrated cinchona tree, from which Peruvian bark is taken to manufacture quinine.

The species found here is a beautiful tree, with large oval leaves, fragrant flowers, and a red bark.

Beyond the plateau, the route of the silver train became tortuous and difficult again.

At many places on the sides of the trail were human skulls set in niches among the rocks, telling tales of suffering in their ghastly silence, while here and there a narrow passage was blocked by the skeleton of a beast that had borne its last burden.

Night came on at last, and the silver train was upon the edge of a vast plain of rock which gave a hollow sound as the feet fell upon it.

Garcia Cuino ordered a halt and here camp was made for the night.

Among the peons was a young Indian who bore in his face and form the impress of the race to which he belonged.

"Loja Curiacco" he was called, and he was a pure-blooded descendant of the Incas kings of the Andes.

There was something proud and haughty in the mien of the son of the ancient sun-worshipers to whom all this rich land had belonged before the coming of the hated Spaniards.

Raymond had observed Loja Curiacco with interest more than once, and the youth had often fancies that the Inca could relate an interesting story, perhaps a tragic one if he chose to narrate his life.

The peons were engaged in the care of the mules when Garcia Cuino fancied that Loja Curiacco was not bestirring himself as fast as he might.

With a Spanish oath he struck the Indian. "Stir your lazy bones or I'll beat you, you dog!" the brutal Spaniard growled.

The eyes of the Indian snapped like coals of fire as the stinging lash cut his flesh.

He wheeled upon Garcia Cuino!

This maddened the haughty Spaniard, and he dealt the Indian a second blow, this time full in the face.

Quick as a flash Loja drew a navaja, or Spanish knife, and made a pass at the Spaniard.

Cuino dropped his whip and retreated.

At the same time he shouted to the other guards:

"Seize the dog and beat him until he is conquered."

The mountaineers under Cuino closed in about the Indian who, with his knife clutched in his hand, kept turning round and round like a hunted animal driven to desperation, and striving constantly to face a circle of foes.

Raymond Anderson and Ham had witnessed the scene, but up to this moment they had remained passive spectators, but Raymond could not remain so any longer.

The free-born son of America's blood boiled at this exhibition of injustice and cruelty.

Raymond dashed through the ring of Spaniards who surrounded the Indian.

"Stop! These peons are in the service of my uncle, and I know he would not permit them to be used as you are about to serve this poor Indian were he present. In the name of Archibald Anderson, I forbid you to commit this cruel deed," cried the brave and true-hearted American boy.

The Spaniard hesitated.

Every eye was turned on Garcia Cuino.

The poor Indian crouched at Raymond's feet with an expression of inexpressible gratitude in his face.

Garcia Cuino struggled silently with contending passion.

The commander of the train was about to speak, when a grizzled old Spaniard, with a most villainous expression upon his repulsive face, whispered something in his ear, which no one but Cuino heard.

Whatever it was that the old Spaniard told Cuino, it evidently caused a change in his determination.

Biting his lips to restrain his passion, the commander of the silver train said:

"Senor Americano, as the representative of my employer, I am governed by you. If it is your will that the dog of an Indian should not be punished, I bow to your superior wisdom. Withdraw, men."

There was a sneer in his voice which was one of mock humility, and Raymond, as he met the fierce eyes of the speaker, felt that he was a dangerous man.

Cuino turned haughtily away, and Ham, who stood but a little distance from his young master, muttered, as he put up a revolver which he had drawn:

"Dar's evil in dat man's eyes, and he means Mars Raymond harm, sure."

"You have saved the life of Loja, maybe. He never forget, never! never! never! When all sleep me tell you how you save your life," said the son of the Incas whom Raymond had shielded.

"What do you mean?" asked Raymond.

"That Cuino mean to kill us all. The peons, you, I—all except he and the other Spaniards," was the answer.

## CHAPTER III.

### CUINO'S PLOT.

Raymond Anderson was amazed at the startling communication which Loja, the Indian, had made.

Ham seemed frightened.

"Gorry mighty! Gorry mighty!" he exclaimed again and again, while he rolled his eyes, and probably would have turned pale, if he could.

Raymond was about to question the Indian, when he glided away, saying in a low voice:

"No time talk now; Spaniard suspect if do. Remember to-night when all sleep."

At a later hour, Garcia Cuino, having stationed his guard so as to protect the silver mine in case of attack, by any of the bands of robbers who at times made bold to assail treasure trains, was seated at some distance from the others of the company engaged in earnest conversation with the old Spaniard who had whispered words of caution in his ear at the moment when he was about to defy Raymond Anderson's authority.

"Gaspard Lucado, the time has come to take you fully into my confidence. You know before we left the mines I revealed to you that it was my intention to seize the treasure sent on this trip, slaughter the peons, and, with my bold followers, take to the pampas. When you learned that the young Americano, the cliff climber—how is he called? Raymond Anderson—was to accompany the train you fancied his presence would thwart my plans. But it shall not be so; he too shall die," said Cuino.

There was a fiendish glitter in the eyes of the old Spaniard, as he replied:

"The silver tempts me, as it will all our men, and we'll make short work of the peons and the young Americano and his black man. But you hinted that the silver we have with the train was but a small part of the wealth you hoped soon to realize. What was your meaning?"

"I will tell you, for I need an assistant, and I am willing to share with one. Listen with attention, comrade, for my story is a remarkable one."

Cuino paused.

He cast a glance about him to assure himself that no listener lurked near, and then he proceeded:

"Some months ago I remained over night in a deserted mountain hut on the route to Quito. A severe storm had overtaken me, and I was glad to seek shelter anywhere. In the hut to which the storm drove me I found another person who was there from the same cause. He was an old man, attired in the garb of a monk of St. Augustine. You know the monastery of the order is on the route I speak of. The monk was sullen and morose, and there was something so strange in his manner that I became convinced that he had lost his reason.

"In the night he awoke me by talking to himself, and, opening my eyes, I saw him studying a strange-looking parchment by the light of a bit of tallow candle.

"From his talk I learned that in some way the old monk had gained possession of one of those ancient maps of the Incas, which contain the directions for finding the hidden treasures of the Sun Worshipers. Knowing that, in several instances, when the meaning of the strange Incan maps had been deciphered immense treasures of gold had thereby

been discovered, I became intensely interested. From the moment when I discovered the character of the map in the possession of the old monk I determined to possess it!"

Garcia Cuino paused.

"Good! Excellent! I am sure had I been in your place, friend Cuino, the same idea would have occurred to me. But did you succeed?"

"Stay; my story is not concluded yet. From the mutterings of the old monk, I concluded that he fancied he had very near correctly read the mysterious map aright, and I remained quiet for some time, hoping to profit by his knowledge if such were in reality the fact."

"What did he say?" put in Lucado.

"You are very deeply interested," sneered Cuino.

"After awhile the old monk fell asleep," he went on.

"That was your time," said the old Spaniard.

"Yes, and I improved it. I arose, gave the old monk a blow on the head that knocked him senseless, and then took the map from the pocket of his robe. I have that map now, Gaspard Lucado, and with you I will seek the hidden treasure of the Incas, for I believe I have read aright the strange pictures, curious figures, and the like, of which the map is composed."

"Your hand on that, Cuino. I'm with you with all my heart. But when is the work of getting rid of the peons and the accursed young Americano to be accomplished?" asked Lucado.

"On the morrow, when we are near the volcanic peaks."

"Why not to-night?"

"Because I would not leave the evidence of crime behind."

"I don't understand."

"I'll explain. When all the peons and the Americano are slaughtered, I mean to hurl their bodies into the crater of the volcanoes."

"Good! You are excellent at plotting, comrade."

"If all the peons were like Loja, the Indian, we might not find it an easy task to overcome them," said Cuino.

"No; but they are not. They are all cowards."

"True. Do you know, Lucado, I have fancied more than once that there was a striking resemblance in that fiery Loja to the Indian princess we carried off from the County of San Pablo. I often see that Indian girl in my dreams. Upon me she pronounced the awful curse of the fire-worshipers, and I have hated Loja because the sight of him inspires me with a secret dread," said Cuino.

"I, too, have noted the resemblance."

"This young Indian may mean me harm. He may be an avenger!"

"Well, after to-morrow he will have ceased to trouble you."

* * * * * * *

When, after the conversation just recorded was ended, the two Spaniards repaired to the fire, where the peons were making the favorite locro, which is the national dish in the mountains, though, in plain English, simply potato soup, the Indian, Loja, crept from behind a vine-grown bowlder, at whose base he had lain concealed, covered by vines, and heard every word of the conversation between Cuino and his equally villainous companion.

Loja crept away into the solitude of the forest, and when well removed from the camp of the silver train, he threw himself flat upon the ground, pressing his face to the earth several times, and, when he had performed the act of worship to the invisible sun, he muttered:

"It is found—it is found! Glory to the mighty sun! The long-lost map containing the secret of the hidden city and buried treasure of the Incas is in the possession of the accursed Spaniard, who drove my sister to her doom. But he shall not long possess it. The map is rightfully mine. I will have it, and then vengeance."

Thus muttering, the son of the former rulers of the land of the Andes returned to the camp.

Loja said to himself, as he retraced his way to the camp:

"Rather would I destroy the parchment, than that it should profit one of the hated Spaniards, and above all, Garcia Cuino, whom I owe a terrible debt of vengeance."

That night, when all slept, or seemed to sleep, except the guards, Loja, true to his promise, crept to the side of Raymond Anderson, and lying down beside the young American, he whispered in his ears.

In a few words Loja told Raymond the conversation he had overheard.

"Then why not steal away at once, and set out for Cerro de Pasco, if to-morrow the treacherous Spaniards mean to murder us?" said Raymond, when he had heard all of Loja's communication.

"That would never do," Loja hastened to say.

"Why not?"

"Because the guards who surround the camp are all on the alert, and were you to attempt to leave now, I am sure it would result in your death," said Loja.

Raymond began to notice that Loja had spoken excellent English since they became better acquainted, and he found out later that the assumption of a dialect, which he had first made, was only to "throw dust in the eyes of the Spaniards," as he expressed it.

The Indian knew it was dangerous for one of his race to know too much.

"What would you advise, then?" asked Raymond, when he had assured himself that Loja was right, and that the guards were all on the alert.

"I will tell you," answered Loja.

"Do so, my friend."

"Wait until to-morrow, and before the volcanic peaks, which are half a day's journey further on, are reached, an opportunity may be offered you to slip away, for you will not be especially watched as long as the Spaniard does not know you suspect him," said Loja.

"I will be governed by your counsels—but must we leave the poor peons to their doom?" asked the kind-hearted youth.

"It seems so; but they are thirty in number, and when driven to the wall, and it becomes a matter of life and death, the cowardly half-breeds may fight and escape, for there are thirty of them to twenty of the Spaniards. If they were of my race, there would be no question about the matter," said Loja.

"Hist!" at this moment said Ham, who lay close to his young master.

Raymond and Loja were silent, but turning their heads, they saw Garcia Cuino stealing toward them.

Something flashed in his hand.

The young American fancied that Cuino held a knife, and was coming to assassinate him.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HAM IS DEFIANT.

The result proved that Raymond was wrong in his suspicion regarding the purpose of Cuino.

The man passed by the young American and his two friends, Ham, the negro, and Loja, the Indian, and, although he had his knife in his hand, it was clear that he had no present hostile designs on our young friend.

In passing the three, Raymond, Loja, and Ham, the Spaniard, stumbled over the brogans of the latter, for they were by no means small.

"Out of the way, slave!" cried the Spaniard, giving the darkey a kick.

Now, slave was the one particular appellation that Ham could not avoid resenting. The Spaniard might have called him almost anything else, and it is probable he would have given no sign; but the word slave, coupled as it was with a kick, was too much for the darkey, who had never known the self-control acquired by the serf to calmly submit to it.

Instantly Ham was on his feet and ready to fight.

"Look heah, sah, I'se a free born 'Merican citizen, if I am brack, an' I don't 'low no low foreign white trash to 'pose on me; I'se ready fer to fight at de drop ob de hat when I'se 'sulted, sah. You make a pint ob dat," cried Ham.

The darkey had his hand on his gun, and as Raymond knew he was a dead-shot on the "draw," with the pistol, he felt that it was possible that Ham might rid him of the infamous assassin who sought his life.

Cuino only noticed the negro by giving utterance to a contemptuous:

"Bah!"

Then he passed on.

It was not his policy to commence his work of bloodshed yet, and he had sufficient control of his passionate nature to restrain his impulse to attack the negro.

The truth was, Cuino was only making the rounds of the guards to satisfy himself that all were vigilant, for while he meant to steal the silver intrusted to him, he purposed not that anyone should rob him.

The knife he carried in his hand to guard against an attack from a secret foe, for as such he already regarded Loja, and being an assassin himself, it struck him that were the Indian an avenger he might play the part of a secret slayer, as he would himself have done had the situations been reversed.

After this the night wore on, and nothing occurred to disturb our friends, though Ham sturdily avowed his intention of "boring" the Spaniard if he troubled him.

The morning dawned bright and beautiful, and the snow-clad summits of the distant mountains were bathed in the roseate glow of the new-born day.

The march was resumed as soon after daybreak as the meager breakfast was dispatched.

Raymond and Ham, as heretofore, followed the trail in the rear of the mule train, watching and waiting for an opportunity to fall behind and make good their escape.

As for Loja, he had assured the young American that they need have no anxiety on his account, for he should make his escape, no matter how closely he might be watched.

It seemed, however, that for some reason, the rear guard suddenly manifested a deep interest in the safety of Raymond and Ham.

Whenever the young American and his companion fell behind the guard stopped.

Raymond made excuses to turn aside to gather rare plants and strange mineral specimens peculiar to the volcanic range, and on such occasions the rear guard were sure to send one or more of their number after him.

These occurrences were not long in convincing the youth that he was closely watched.

It seemed that Garcia Cuino must have suspected his designs, and especially instructed the rear guard to prevent his escape.

The time was slipping away, and more than half the forenoon had passed, and yet the opportunity anxiously looked for by Raymond and the darkey when they could steal away had not come.

By noon the place selected by the Spaniard to become the scene of a wholesale murder would be reached, and then only fate could tell what would befall our young friend, though human judgment would say his fate would be sealed.

As the hours went by a feeling akin to despair began to steal upon the American youth, and Ham was positively terrified, although he did not lack a certain kind of courage when it came to the test, as Raymond well knew.

What would the issue be?

How would the Spaniard's terrible plot end?

The reader will remember that half an hour after the departure of the silver train, Archibald Anderson discovered the "bark" upon the office floor, which had upon its surface, in Indian writing, the message warning him that Raymond was in peril.

This message, as was afterward explained, had been dropped through the window just before the departure of the silver train by Loja, who having for some time been playing the spy upon Garcia Cuino, had overheard enough of his and Gaspard Lucado's secret conversation to warrant him in placing the warning where he hoped it would be seen in time to prevent Raymond's accompanying the silver train.

The message came too late.

Something like two hours after the departure of the train, Archibald Anderson, who meant now to have Raymond abandon the train and return to Cerro de Pasco, dispatched two Indian hunters, called respectively Huano and Talve, in pursuit of the train.

The two native hunters were swift-footed, and they should have overtaken the silver train before noon of the first day's march, but one of those unforeseen incidents which can only be regarded as fatalities, which no man can foresee or guard against, prevented.

Reaching a water course which the silver train had crossed on the rude log bridge, which had spanned it—when they reached it, the two hunters found themselves stopped by an angry flood, which had swept away the bridge and in a few moments transformed a sluggish little stream at the bottom of a defile into a raging torrent which was impassable.

A minor volcanic mount near had suddenly, as was its wont, assumed an active state, and belched forth a vast torrent of water and mud from its mysterious depths, flooding the gulch in an incredibly short time.

To cross the torrent the two Indian hunters of the Andes found it necessary to traverse a considerable tract of country and make a wide detour, and then come back again on their original course on the side of the defile, which it was imperative they should reach.

All this march and countermarch was out of their way, and of course their long delay in reaching the silver train, which they were determined to overtake, was no fault of theirs.

The long absence of the hunters whom he had sent in pursuit of the silver train, with imperative instructions not to return on any account without Raymond, occasioned Archibald Anderson the greatest uneasiness of mind.

The anxious relative of the young American became worked up to such a state when night came and still no tidings of the hunters reached Cerro de Pasco, that he could no longer himself rest inactive. Nearly all night he remained in his office, pacing up and down, and eagerly listening for the sound which would tell him his messengers were approaching.

The night passed, and at the close of the second day, just as Archibald Anderson himself, attended by a company of his miners, was setting out in pursuit of the silver train, the two hunters, travel-stained and weary, arrived.

Their faces were sad, and in answer to the American's eager inquiries, they in substance related the following:

They had succeeded in crossing the torrent and reaching the trail of the silver train; they had followed it to the neighborhood of the volcanic peaks, which Garcia Cuino had, it will be remembered, selected as the scene for the perpetration of the terrible crime which he meditated.

Before they reached the neighborhood of the minor volcanic peaks, an earthquake shock, which was of terrific intensity, shook the mountain, throwing them flat upon their faces.

This shock, by the way, had been felt at Cerro de Pasco, but only in a comparatively slight degree, as the shock had traveled in a lateral direction and away from the silver mines, instead of in a transverse direction and toward it.

Upon recovering themselves the Indian hunters pressed on and came to a rock plain, where they discovered the mangled bodies of several mules and peons, who had been slain by bullet wounds or knife-thrusts, but all trace of the remainder of the silver train completely vanished at this point.

The Indian hunters declared that the train had gone no further.

The mystery was now, what had become of the survivors, no trace of whose bodies even could be discovered, and a week's search failed to solve the dreadful mystery.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE MASSACRE.

In vain was every attempt of Raymond and Ham to evade the Spanish guards of the silver train.

"We shall have to fight for our lives, I foresee. Look to your weapons, Ham, and when the time comes, be ready to use them," said Raymond.

"Gorry mighty, I's skeered, mars, but while dar am a bullet left, I'se gwine to stood by yah. You know dat," answered the darkey.

It was near the noon-hour, a few moments before the terrific earthquake shock which had prostrated the two Indian hunters, Talve and Huano.

Toiling upward, the silver train was winding around the volcanic peaks which have been mentioned so many times.

Above them there were frightful openings in the earth's crust, and from those yawning chasms rolled up a cloud of sulphurous vapors.

The united effect of the silence and solitude of the place was deeply felt.

The great depth of the cavity, the dark, precipitous sides of the ledges about them, and the frowning sky above, all formed an impressive picture, which might have been taken for the gateway to the infernal regions.

Occasionally a displaced rock went thundering downward, gathering momentum at each revolution, leaping over precipices, and jostling other rocks which joined in the race till they all struck the bottom with a deep rumbling sound, shivered like so many bomb-shells into a thousand atoms, and telling the members of the silver train what would be their fate if they made a single mis-step.

The scene was one appropriate for the reading of Dante's "Inferno."

The pathway echoed beneath the hoofs of the mules, and there was the same hollow sound which had been observed on the rock plain further back.

The young American wondered if there were not vast unknown and unexpected caverns beneath his very feet.

Truly Cuino had chosen a terrible scene for the enactment of a tragedy. Suddenly a pistol-shot was discharged by Cuino. It was the signal of death.

Instantly the Spaniards turned upon the peons, attacking them with a ferocity and savageness that was terrible.

The peons, unarmed as they were in most instances, could make but a feeble resistance.

The Spanish guards were before and behind them, and they were slaughtered like sheep.

It was a massacre.

Wild yells, shrieks, and groans intermingled, and the horrors of a wholesale murder transformed the mountain scene into a pandemonium lacking not a single feature to make it complete.

Raymond Anderson and Ham found themselves fiercely attacked by Cuino and his men as the slaughter went on.

Desperately did the young American and his companion strive to fight their way through their foes, but all their efforts were vain, and they were hurled back again and again against the rocks which formed one side of the trail.

Not one peon could be seen alive in an incredibly short time.

But Loja had not perished.

Suddenly the Spaniards hurled themselves upon Raymond and Ham with a ferocious impetuosity that was resistless, and they were torn from the position which they had last taken.

A short brief struggle followed.

In the midst of it came a terrific shock.

It was the earthquake.

"Misericordia!" went up like the sound of many waters from the throats of the Spaniards.

There was one terrible shock and then the earth rocked.

The mules trembled and moaned, and the fierce men were stricken with awful terror.

The rocks came crashing down the mountain side, and Raymond saw Garcia Cuino's head and shoulders crushed beneath a great bowlder, which seemed to have singled the assassin out as its especial victim.

Fate had brought a terrible retribution upon the murderers of innocent men.

A blinding wave of sulphurous gas enveloped the scene, but as it settled down upon the cracking earth, through it Raymond saw Loja beside the body of Cuino. The Indian

snatched something from the bosom of the dead Spaniard, and then he bounded to the side of Raymond and his companion.

Before a word passed between them the earth gave way beneath their feet, and down, down, into a dark abyss went men, mules, and all the doomed silver train, save the few peons and animals afterward discovered by Talve and Huano, the two Indians whom the American silver miner sent in pursuit of Raymond.

The earth with the next evolution of the earthquake closed the great crevice which had engulfed our friends.

To all intents they were buried in the depths of the earth.

Raymond was not seriously injured by the fall into the dark space, and when he found himself upon a solid foundation he shouted the names of Ham and Loja.

A faint voice answered him, and groping his way through that dungeon gloom he came upon the body of the negro.

Ham had been stunned by the fall, but he gradually recovered, and then Raymond and he began to grope about the place in which they were entombed.

Again and again they called the Indian.

No answer was returned, and they were finally driven to the conclusion that the Inca had perished.

Could any situation be more alarming than the one in which our friends were now placed?

They were entombed.

All the young cliff climber's skill in scaling the steepest rocks would here avail nothing.

There was a roof of rocks.

Through these he could not penetrate.

Raymond sat down calmly to reflect upon the situation.

Meanwhile Ham discovered the dead bodies of the mules which bore the provisions of the ill-fated silver train.

"We shall not starve for some time at least, for the mules were laden with food intended to serve as another day's rations for fifty men," said Raymond, when Ham had communicated his important discovery.

In the course of an hour or so the entombed ones had explored the narrow passage in the mountain which had become their prison to such an extent that they were convinced the opening through the earth extended for a long distance.

Failing to find the end of it they returned to the dead mules and began the work of removing the provision to another part of the cavern.

They found besides the food a quantity of ammunition, a hatchet, and what was at that time the greatest boon of all, some matches and tallow candles.

From the fact that the atmosphere of the cavern was not dangerously impure, Raymond naturally arrived at the conclusion that there was an opening to the earth's surface somewhere, and he resolved to seek for it.

As soon as a light illuminated the place our friends began to explore the cavern to some advantage.

Raymond carried one of the candles which he had lost no time in igniting after he found it, and led the way, while Ham followed.

A journey underground of perhaps two or three miles followed, and Raymond began to fear that the ramification of the subterranean channel which he was now convinced was the dry course of an inter-mountain torrent would lead him an endless journey, when in the dim and shadowy distance he saw a faint light gleaming like a star of hope.

The hearts of the imprisoned wanderers leaped.

"Light! Gorry, light!" cried Ham, and in his joy the delighted darkey dashed ahead of Raymond.

The latter increased his speed, and in a few moments he reached an opening in the rocky wall of his prison.

Ham had already disappeared through it.

Following him, Raymond found himself on the surface of the earth again, and in the broad light of day.

The place in which Raymond found himself was a remarkable exhibition of those strange freaks of nature which are found in the Andes.

A circular valley of considerable extent, perhaps three-quarters of a mile or a mile in diameter, was before him; but, remarkable, as it was, as Raymond glanced about the valley, which was well wooded and delightful and provided with a stream of excellent water, he could see no way of getting out of the valley.

Upon every side, towering hundreds of feet upward, were steep cliffs as abrupt in their ascent as the walls of a house.

At the top of the mighty wall about the valley grew a dense forest of tall trees.

"Probably the foot of man has never trodden here before," said Raymond, as his eyes took in the wonderful hidden valley of the Andes.

"Well, dis am better dan de cave. We'se got guns and plenty of powder and shot. Dar must be game un fish in dis valley, I think, an' we ain't a-goin' fer to starve, dat's one consolation. We'll find a way to climb dem cliffs yet, mars," said Ham.

"I hope so," assented the young American.

Both Raymond and the darkey were pretty well tired out, and it was not until the following morning that they began to explore the valley, in the hope of finding their way out of it.

They had not proceeded very far, keeping close to the

wall of the cliffs and intending to make a complete circuit of the valley, when they were arrested by the sound of a human voice.

## CHAPTER VI.

### LOJA.

Believing themselves to be the only survivors of the silver train, our friends were considerably startled at the unexpected sound of a human voice breaking suddenly upon the silence of that mountain solitude.

But as the voice shouted again it was recognized.

"It is Loja! It is Loja!" cried Raymond, in delight.

"Glory to de lamb, so it am!" shouted Ham, as a form which they knew to be that of the young Indian was seen approaching.

Warmly was Loja welcomed.

In answer to the many questions put to him, he said:

"I must have fallen into a branch of the same channel as yourselves, for I made my way out through the same opening in the rocks that you escaped through, as I know, because I saw your tracks."

In a short time the three friends made a complete circuit of the valley, but they found no way of escape.

Everywhere the steep, high-towering cliffs confronted them.

It seemed they had escaped from one prison into another, but they did not despair as yet.

"Our only chance is to climb the cliffs. By scaling the rocky wall can we alone escape," said Raymond.

"That is true; for this valley is a hidden spot unknown to men, I am sure," said the Indian.

In their journey, the imprisoned ones saw a troop of strange animals.

"What you call him?" said Ham, indicating the last of the troop as they disappeared in the wood.

"A llama or mountain camel," answered Loja.

Directly several of the animals emerged from the cover and gazed wonderingly upon the human creatures who had intruded upon their domain.

The llama is a beautiful animal, with long, slender neck and fine legs, a graceful carriage, pointed ears, soft, restless eyes, and quivering lips. It has a gentle disposition; when angry it will spit, and when hurt it will shed tears. Some specimens are entirely white, but it is generally dark brown, with patches of white.

The llama requires very little food or drink, and it was at one time the beast of burden of the Andes, where it was domesticated, but since the introduction of horses, asses and mules, the rearing of the llama has decreased.

They are very common in Peru, and the llama, guanaco, alpaca and vicuna were the "four sheep" of the ancient Incas.

The first of these clothed the common people, the second the nobles, the third the royal governors, and the fourth the Incas.

Ham raised his gun, but Raymond said:

"Do not shoot the beautiful animal until it becomes a necessity to do so."

"All right, jess as you say, but him make good steak, suah."

On the return to the cave the evidence that the valley abounded in animal life was sustained by the sight of a tapir—a strange animal, which is a link between the elephant and the hog.

The well-known black boar of the Andes was also seen.

Squirrels, hares, bats, opossums, and large guinea-pigs abounded.

The three reached the cave, and at once set about removing the provisions and ammunition from it.

This accomplished, what was to be the terrible problem of their lives began to receive their serious consideration.

"Having by our explorations convinced ourselves that there is no way of escape from this valley except by climbing the cliffs, let us set about doing that in some way," said Raymond.

"What way would you suggest?" asked Loja.

"Make 'um ladder," cried Ham.

"That idea might be feasible if we could construct a ladder long enough; but the tallest trees from which the sides of ladders might be constructed would not reach one-fifth part of the distance to the top of the cliff," said Raymond.

"But we might place one above the other, splice them, and then raise the entire structure. But no, that could not be done," said Loja.

"If we could find supports for different ladders on the side of the ledge—if, for instance, shelves projected at intervals—we might possibly make the ascent by means of ladders," Raymond said.

The friends continued to discuss the question of climbing the cliff, and they determined to make a still closer inspection of its walls.

Acting upon this resolution, they once more began a more careful examination of the cliff.

At the northern side of the valley there seemed to be several projections in the smooth cliff wall, and reaching the base of the rocks, our friends saw that the first projection was not more than fifty feet from the ground.

Cheered by this discovery, they cut down a couple of straight, slender palms, and hastily constructed a rude ladder, which was placed against the side of the cliff.

Ham was the first to ascend it.

The darkey had scarcely reached the ledge to which the top of the ladder extended, when there came a deep roar from a small cavern in the cliff just back of the ledge which Ham had gained.

"A jaguar—a jaguar!" cried Loja.

The next instant, from the cave, a fine specimen of the South American lion, as this animal is called, emerged.

Ham suddenly found himself confronted upon a narrow ledge by the most ferocious of South American animals.

Raymond drew his rifle to his shoulder.

He lowered it almost instantly, for, owing to the relative positions of the jaguar and Ham on the ledge, he dared not fire at the animal for fear of hitting his friend, the darkey.

For the moment Ham was utterly paralyzed with horror, and then he began to back toward the ladder, keeping his eye on the jaguar.

It was a moment of the most thrilling peril.

Ham cautiously drew a large American bowie-knife.

As if this had been a prearranged signal, the crouching South American lion leaped at the negro.

Had the animal fairly struck him, Ham would have been precipitated down the cliff upon the jagged rocks at its base; but, as the fierce animal leaped, Ham threw himself flat along the edge of the ledge, with the bowie-knife uplifted in his hand.

As the jaguar fell upon him, the negro drove the blade of his knife to the hilt in its carcass.

With a howl the animal drew itself up and attacked Ham again.

While he plied his knife desperately, Ham yelled:

"Shoot de beast. Shoot him, mars, he kill me; I take de chance oh your shooting me."

It was, indeed, Ham's only chance.

The darkey would be slain by the jaguar if that animal were not slain by a bullet from the rifle of the young American.

Raymond took a deliberate aim and pulled the trigger, and as the detonation of the discharged weapon reverberated through that silent, hidden valley of the Andes, the jaguar leaped into the air and fell over the edge of the cliff at the young marksman's feet, shot through the heart.

But had Raymond's marksmanship saved Hams?

The darkey lay motionless.

Raymond ran up the ladder, and gained the ledge just as the negro sat up.

He had received some ugly cuts and scratches, but Raymond thought that his wounds would not be long in healing.

Ham climbed painfully down the ladder, and as the day was drawing to a close they all returned to the place where they had left the provisions.

Here they made a camp for the night.

During the hours of darkness there was a slight earthquake shock, and in the morning the prisoners of the hidden valley discovered that the opening in the rocky wall through which they had entered the valley had closed.

The following day a rude hut was constructed against the side of the cliff, and the party returned to the ladder.

A second ladder was constructed and placed upon the ledge where the first ended, and Raymond, the young cliff climber, ascended to the second ledge.

There was still another ledge above this, and a third ladder was manufactured next day and placed in position.

Up the series of ladders climbed Raymond, and stood upon the ledge where the last ended, one hundred feet above the valley.

He now made the discovery that there were no more ledges to support ladders, and he was forced to abandon the idea of climbing the cliff by their assistance.

Indeed, it became evident now, that the question how to climb the cliff was one that could not be answered.

In despair Raymond said:

"It cannot be done. It seems to me we are to be imprisoned here for life."

The prospect was a terrible one.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CONDORS.

"Do not despair yet: although we may not be able to climb the cliffs by means of the ladders we may yet scale them by other means," said Loja.

"Surely you are jesting," Raymond replied.

"'Spees you'se gwine to make wings and fly out ob dis," said Ham, with a groan.

Loja had just completed dressing his wounds with some medicinal herbs, the properties of which were well known to the young Indian, who knew all about the vegetation of the Andes as well as the animals found there.

"We shall not fly out of the valley with our own wings, but the wings of yonder great birds may aid us," replied Loja, pointing up into the vault of the heavens.

His companions followed the direction he indicated with their eyes and they saw a couple of great birds flapping lazily about, above the snow-clad summits of the high mountains.

"What are those great birds—eagles?" asked Raymond.

"No, they are condors, and no other living creature can soar as high. They are the great vultures of the Andes," explained Loja.

"But how do you mean to make them serve us?" asked Raymond.

"If we capture one, attach a rope-ladder to him, and then set him free, he would, it may be, carry the end of the ladder to the top of the cliff and become entangled there. If the ladder were securely fastened, it would sustain us," was Loja's answer.

"Yes, but I think it would be difficult to take one of those great birds alive," said Raymond.

"Or to shoot him. I heard de hunters say he mighty hard bird to hit," said Ham.

"That is true, but we may capture one or more of them for all that, for I have seen it done."

"How?" asked Raymond.

"The usual way is to kill some animal and expose it to the condor, allowing the bird to gorge himself until he becomes so sluggish as to be easily lassoed. An old mare is the best bait for the condor, but the llama will do, I think," said Loja.

"But the trying of the experiment with the condor will involve an immense amount of labor, for it will be necessary to construct a rope-ladder long enough to reach to the top of the rocks, and where shall we procure the material?"

"The vines growing in profusion here will answer."

"Then let us attempt the capture of the great bird by all means."

"We will."

"De fust thing will be fo' to git de bait," said Ham.

"Certainly," assented Raymond. "But that need not trouble us, for I can easily bring down one or more of those animals with my rifle," he added.

"Then do so, by all means, and as soon as you can," said Loja.

Raymond and the Indian stole into the woods, which covered a large portion of the valley, leaving Ham to await their return at the base of the ledge, where he was reclining on a mossy bank, feeling quite weak from loss of blood.

In a short time there came two reports of a gun from the woods, and not long afterward Loja and Raymond dragged a couple of llamas out upon the rocks.

The young cliff climber had found no difficulty in shooting the two animals, for they were by no means shy, though in the wild state, because they had not been hunted by man.

Having exposed the carcasses of the llamas to the eyes of the condors, which possess remarkable power of vision, our friends retreated into the woods, where Loja made a rude lasso from a fibrous and very tough but flexible species of creeper.

The condors did not observe the llamas for a long time, and our friends began to fear that they would soar away without discovering the tempting feast they had spread for them, when suddenly one of the great birds shot downward like a flash and pounced upon the llamas.

His mate followed him, and in a few moments the pair of gigantic buzzards of the Andes were rending and ravenously devouring the flesh of the llamas.

The near view they now had of the condors revealed to Raymond and Ham the real size of these monstrous birds, which Marco Polo, with his usual vast exaggeration, said, "could lift an elephant high enough from the ground to kill it by its fall."

The condor's extended wings had a stretch of about twelve feet. The head, neck, and front of the breast were bare. The beak was shorter than that of the eagle.

Raymond remembered that he had read stories of condors carrying off children, but when he mentioned this in a whisper to Loja, the Indian smiled and said:

"That is not true. No one ever knew a condor to carry off a child, and it will not attack man except in defense of its eggs. If, however, its nest is attacked it will make a desperate fight, and the most venturesome hunter of the Andes will not go near the nest of a condor."

The prisoners of the cliff-walled valley lay watching the condors while they devoured the llama, and it took those ravenous creatures but a comparatively short time to completely gorge themselves.

When, at last, the animals were all devoured, and the condors perched sleepily upon the rocks beside the bones, which alone remained of their feast, Loja, with his lasso in hand, crept toward them.

Selecting the largest of the condors, which was a full-grown male bird, the Indian flung his primitive lasso.

The noose settled about the king vulture's neck before the creature made a move, but then he took the alarm.

He flapped up into the air.

Loja was jerked about roughly by the struggles of the great bird, and Raymond was rushing to his assistance, when the rude lasso broke, and away went the condor and his mate, up, up into the high altitude of the heavens, while the disappointed trio watched them until they became mere specks upon the horizon.

"We have failed," said Raymond, completely nonplussed.

"Yes, but we may succeed the next time. I have an idea the condor's nest is somewhat on the side of the cliff in this neighborhood. Those birds usually select inaccessible ledges for their nests. But I ought not to call them nests, for they only consist of a few sticks around the eggs, which are always two in number."

When, wearied with the events of the day, the little party sought the shelter of their hut, Loja said:

"I believe this valley to contain vast hidden treasures of the ancient Incas of whom I am a descendant, and, supposing such to be the case, I believe there exists a secret way of reaching it of which we are ignorant. I will trust you with a secret and the story of my life, for I feel that I can confide in you."

"You may safely trust me, Loja. We are all brothers in misfortune, and the first and only wish of each now is to escape from this mysterious valley," said Raymond.

"True, my brother. To relate my story. I am really a descendant of the ancient Incas, and there was a tradition in our family that an ancient king of the sun worshipers, when his country was invaded by the Spaniards, buried the gold and silver treasures of his realm in a secret place that the usurper might never find them. To guard against the possibility of the secret of the hiding-place of the treasure being lost to the Incas a map or tracing in hieroglyphics was made by the priests of the sun, and its keeping was intrusted to my ancient forefathers, for they were the most powerful of the Incan king's subjects.

"The story, as it has been handed down from father to son through the generations who have lived and died since the conquest of our land by the Spaniards, continues that many years ago the secret map was stolen by the Jesuit priests, or given them as a ransom for the life of one of my ancestors.

"Through all the lapse of time, from one to another, a partial but imperfect description of the ancient map has been preserved by the Incas of our family, and the one dream and hope of each has ever been that the glorious god of light, our god, the magnificent sun, would grant him the boon of finding the long lost writing or map of our ancient king.

"The boon which was denied all others was granted to me, for I have the map in my possession."

The Indian paused.

"Can this be true?" exclaimed the young American, starting to his feet.

"It is, it is; I found it in the possession of Garcia Cuino, who according to his own statement stole it from an old monk whom he left for dead.

"When the big rock fell upon Cuino, I took the map from him, and from the description, partial and imperfect though it be, which I had learned, I knew the map was the one made at the time of the Spanish invasion of Peru.

"Had Cuino not perished in the way he did, he would one day have fallen by my hand, for I had a terrible wrong to avenge.

"In the past, Cuina was a pirate, and he made a raid upon the little coast village where my family lived, murdered my parents and carried off my beautiful sister, whom he married and drove to her death.

"I swore to kill him, and I became a peon of the Cerro de Pasco mines to keep my oath.

"A former member of Cuino's pirate band once visited the mines, and called Cuino by his real name. As I happen to know, the man meant to betray him to your uncle, but Cuino murdered him that night and buried his body in the mines."

The Indian paused.

"Why did you not tell my uncle the truth?" asked Raymond.

"I feared to do so, for who would believe a poor, despised Indian against a white man?"

"There is truth in your reflection."

"Yes. But now to my theory about the easiest way out of the valley. If, on making a search, we discover the buried treasure of the Incas, then all doubt as to the fact that there is a secret way out will be settled, for at the time the treasure was hidden the Incas had no time to lower it into the valley with the men to buy it. Indeed, the reading of the map, when I have completed it, as I have not yet quite done, may show up just where to find the way out," said Loja.

They could hardly wait for day to dawn.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN VALLEY.

The captives of the hidden valley of the Andes, exhausted with the labor and excitement of the day, finally slept.

Dreams visited Raymond, and he thought the ancient map of the Incas served to guide him to a secret exit from the mysterious, cliff-bound valley.

In his visions he was again safely home in New York with his parents, and the thrilling perils and strange experiences of his sojourn in the Andes were already things of the past.

Suddenly the young American awoke.

Raymond was reclining within the rude hut which himself and friends had constructed, and quite near the door.

The moon hung above the secret valley, and the light of the silvery luminary fell upon it.

Within the hut a semi-gloom prevailed, and as Raymond awoke and opened wide his eyes a shudder crept over him, while a strange premonition or sense of danger stole upon his senses.

What could it mean?

What unseen danger menaced the occupants of the hut?

Loja, the Indian, slept.

The snores of the darkey proclaimed that he too was wrapt in the arms of somnolency.

Profound silence reigned.

Raymond listened.

He heard nothing.

The youth fancied himself the victim of his dreams, as nothing to disturb him could be seen or heard.

Silently he arose.

Instantly he sank back.

The sound of footsteps reached his ears.

Many thoughts flashed through the mind of the young American, all of which tended to the same ultimatum, that a human being was approaching.

Cautiously Raymond approached the door of the hut.

As he reached it, a shadow, dark and well defined, fell across it.

The shadow was the outline of a human form, but muffled, and so strangely clad, that Raymond could not tell whether it was the shadow of a man or woman.

In an instant the shadow disappeared.

Raymond leaped to his feet, for with the vanishing of the shadow the spell that had enchained him was broken, and he was himself wide awake and upon the alert.

He rushed without the hut.

There was no one there.

Silence reigned, and no living thing, human or animal, disturbed the repose of the oppressive silence or the immobility of nature.

The noise accompanying the movements of the youth awakened his companions.

Directly Loja and Ham joined him without the hut.

"What is it? What has occurred?" asked Loja.

"Gorry, dar hain't anudder jaguar 'bout. Gracious! if dar am, somebody else kin tackle him; 'scuse me dis time," said Ham, whose experience with the ferocious animal he had encountered on the ledge was yet fresh in his memory.

"I saw the shadow of a human form and heard his footsteps!" said Raymond, in a tone of conviction.

"Are you sure you were not dreaming?" asked Loja.

"Impossible that I should be deceived. I was as wide awake as you are now."

"This is most strange. How can there be any human being in this valley? We alone survived of all the company of the silver train," said Loja.

"It is a mystery," replied Raymond.

"Gorry, look yere!" exclaimed Ham.

The darkey had fallen upon his knees.

He was examining the soft earth in front of the hut.

"What is it?" cried Raymond.

"Tracks!" cried Ham.

"Tracks! Tracks!" echoed Raymond and the Indian, and in a moment they too were upon their knees by the side of the darkey.

"Ham is right!" said Loja.

"So he is," assented Raymond.

"Here are the footprints of a man's foot," Raymond added.

"Yes, you were right; the shadow you saw was that of a living man, and he has been here. He must have looked into the hut while we slept. We were at his mercy then," said Loja, and he glanced about him apprehensively.

"Yes, but in this discovery I see something hopeful. If man comes here there must be a secret entrance to the valley, for none of the silver train except ourselves escaped. We will watch for the mysterious man. He may come again, and we will follow him. He may lead us out of our valley prison. Yet why he should avoid us, why visit us thus secretly, puzzles me," said Raymond.

"I cannot account for the conduct of the unknown," said Loja.

"Nor I. Gorry mighty, he done go off dat way. Look, him tracks plain; less foller dem," said Ham.

"Yes. Come, Loja, you are a skilful trailer; you can track the mysterious night-visitant, even when his trail would be invisible to us, if you possess the skill of the hunter of the Andes."

Thus said our young American.

"I can follow any trail that man can trace. If the unknown has left a clew to his course, I'll track it to the end," said Loja.

Thereupon he began to follow the tracks of the mysterious human who had visited the hut in the hidden valley while its inmates slept.

Raymond and Ham followed the Indian.

The tracks led across the valley to the west.

Over the soft soil the Indian proceeded rapidly, but when a bed of hard rock was reached upon which the foot left no imprint he went slower; still he assured his companions that he was on the trail.

Over the flinty bed of the volcanic rocks Loja trailed his man, and to the steep wall of the cliff on the western side of the valley.

Close to the wall the trail led, only to end at the solid rock.

When the sheer face of the tremendous cliff forbade further advance, Loja halted.

He was puzzled.

Raymond was amazed.

Ham gave vent to his astonishment.

"Gorry! Whar hab he gone? "Lud-a-massy! he done go right through de big rocks, or he had wings like dat big buzzard bird, de condor, and flew hisself up de rocks. I tole you I specs him spook! Yes, sah! You find out dat man am regular ghost. Dem fellows kin go anywhere. Lawdy, Is'se got no use fo' spirits, 'crep dey is bottled. I'se gwine fer to git back to de hut. Dis is a bad sign. Spooks nebber means any good. Don't follow him no moah. Took my 'vice, luff de spirits 'lone, er dey will git mad and raise Cain. Yes, dey will. I'm telling yer sense, I is," said Ham.

Ham was in dead earnest.

He was sure that the mysterious visitant was a supernatural visitor.

Raymond laughed.

"Spooks, as you call them, are supposed to be too ethereal to leave a track like that we have followed. As far as I have ever heard, when you find the imprint of a number nine shoe, you may safely say something decidedly more solid than spirits made it. No, no, Ham, our visitor was a real live man, and we must solve the mystery of his disappearance. In doing so we may effect our own escape, for the presence of a human being here naturally leads me to suppose there is a way of getting into and out of the valley of which we know not," said Raymond.

"You are right, senor. We will yet trace this stranger to some purpose. He may be cunning, but he cannot long fool Loja, the hunter of the Andes. Let us sound the rocks hereabouts. Who knows but we may make an important discovery," said the Indian.

"An excellent idea. The existence of a hidden passage may be revealed. Would to Heaven that we might discover such," said Raymond.

Then the three began to sound upon the rocks.

Here and there they struck the seemingly solid cliff, but no hollow sound was heard; nothing was discovered to lead our friends to the finding of what they so fervently sought.

Disappointed, they were turning away, about to return to the hut, when a strange, hollow laugh, which sounded like a mocking murmur, owing to the distance, reached their

ears, and looking up, they saw upon the summit of the cliff a strange object.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MYSTERIOUS MONK.

What was the object that our friends saw upon the top of the cliff that bounded their valley prison in the heart of the Andes?

It was the outline of a human form, clothed in the garb of a monk of the order of St. Augustine, whose monastery was located in the neighborhood of Cerro de Pasco.

Only for a moment was the form visible, and then it disappeared.

The short glimpse our friends had of him convinced them that the man was undoubtedly a monk of the order of St. Augustine, but his garb was torn and tattered, and there was something wild and fantastic in his appearance which appertained not to the external garb of the usual monk of St. Augustine.

The dark robe of the holy order of the ancient Jesuit monastery was in rags, and the cowl had been torn from his shoulders.

When, with a mocking laugh, the monk vanished into the dark wood that crowned the cliff, the three prisoners of the hidden valley gazed at each other in amazement.

"A monk of the Order of St. Augustine here and he mocks at our distress? This is most strange—inexplicable," said Raymond.

"I cannot comprehend the monk's conduct," said Loja.

"Do you think it was he who made the tracks we found in the valley?"

Thus asked Raymond.

"Yes," replied Loja.

"Then, although his conduct is an inexplicable mystery, there must be a secret outlet," said Raymond.

"True. Time and patience will reveal it, I believe, even if the reading of the ancient map of my forefathers—the sun-worshipers—should fail to do so. It is useless to search further to-night. We will go back to the hut, and in the morning the ancient map of the Incas shall be our guide," said Loja.

Raymond assented.

Ham muttered:

"'Specs dat man am spook-man yit, an' I kin nebber beliebe him not a spirit, 'less I get my bread-hooks clutched on him once."

Loja led the way back to the hut, but there was not much sleep for any of the prisoners of the valley that night.

All were too anxious, too excited by the mysterious events of the night, to sleep.

A thousand different thoughts suggested themselves to each as they reflected upon the mystery which had suddenly confronted them.

When at last day dawned a frugal meal was partaken of, and then, seated at the door of the hut under the wall of the cliff, Loja produced the ancient map of the Incas, of the days of the Spanish conquest, and began to study it.

Raymond and Ham watched the young Indian with the deepest interest, knowing full well that their deliverance might depend upon the correct reading of the strange hieroglyphics of a race of men who had disappeared forever, leaving one of their great secrets in the map which Loja was deciphering.

An hour or more the young Indian spent in study.

Finally he folded up the map.

"What have you learned?" asked Raymond.

"I have found out that the treasure of the Incas undoubtedly is buried in this valley, but the part of the map directing how to enter it still puzzles me. However, as I think I have found out where to look for the treasure, we will begin our search. Having once found it, we shall know that as far as I have gone I have read the map aright, and I do not by any means despair of yet fully comprehending it," said Loja.

As he spoke a shadow fell upon the map in his hand.

The young Indian leaped to his feet.

Raymond, who was seated, did the same.

Ham uttered an exclamation, and pointed upward to the summit of the cliff.

Raymond and Loja looked but saw nothing.

"What was it?" cried the Indian.

"What did you see?" demanded Raymond.

"De spook!" answered Ham.

"The monk we saw before on the summit of the cliff?" Raymond inquired.

"Yes, sah!"

Loja quickly concealed the map.

"Could he have seen the map?" he gasped.

"Him look right down on it," said Ham.

"And then when he saw you observe fled, him he, eh?" asked Raymond.

"He did. Jist scooted."

"The mystery is still more puzzling. Why should this stranger act as he does? Why should he spy upon us, yet offer no assistance? He cannot be a true monk of St. Augustine, for I have heard they are a kind-hearted and charitable association, and they would aid us to escape if they were aware of our situation. There is a deep mystery here that is altogether beyond me," said Raymond.

Loja said little, but there was a frightful look in his face.

After a little reflection he said:

"We will begin our search for the buried treasure of the Incas, if you are willing."

"I am. You can count on my assistance," replied Raymond.

"Me too. When you'se arter treasure Hamlet, the melancholy Dane, are wid yah. Yes, sah, all de Juliets in de country hab to take a rear seat when de mighty dollar—dem big, round iron shiners I lub so well, are flashing up. Count on me for a treasure-hunter chery time."

Thus Ham characteristically expressed his sentiments.

Loja led the way to the center of the valley.

When he had reached a point which was pretty nearly equally distant from each of the cliff walls, he paused, and began to search about in the tall grass.

There was a dense wood all around, which concealed the party from the sight of any one without the valley.

Presently Loja found a great rock.

An exclamation of satisfaction fell from his lips.

"The reading of the Incas' map holds good so far. Now to raise this rock," he said.

The three friends grasped it.

They tugged away.

With all their strength they strove to lift it, but in vain.

"I will return to the hut to procure the hatchet, and we'll cut some stout poles and use them as levers," said Raymond.

As he spoke he hastened away.

Loja and Ham sat down to await his return.

Half an hour went by.

Still Raymond did not appear, although he had more than time to make the journey to the hut and return.

His friends became alarmed.

"What can have happened to detain the young Americano?" said Loja.

"Gorry, I'se afeared suffin bad has happened, and I'se goin' right now to look fer him. I'se 'sponsible to his father fer him, I is, an' I'se gwine to do all I kin to git him back safe to New York. I reckon if he once gits out ob dis scrape he won't be wantin' to scoot off to no foreign lands no more. He'll hab enough of dat foolishness," said Ham.

He started for the hut, and Loja, filled with evil forebodings and misgivings, to which he did not give utterance, followed him.

They arrived at the hut, but found no trace of Raymond.

They shouted his name again and again, but only the echo of their own voices came back to them.

"Gorry, I 'spees de spook hab carried off Mars Raymond. Oh, what shall I do? Fo' de law, I'se all broke up. Mr. Indian, can't you found Mars Raymond? Oh, Lawdy; I'se clean lost all heart now, if anything bad has happened to my young mars. Come, good Loja; look fer him. Find him track with your sharp eyes, and maybe we find him yet," said Ham, in great distress.

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## CHAPTER X.

### RAYMOND SEES THE MONK.

It was indeed a mystery what had become of Raymond; and Loja, who was not without a degree of the superstition of his race, said:

"The evil spirit must be here. Harm has come to Raymond, I am sure. It seems this secret valley is an accursed spot. Heaven protect us. We will try to find him, though."

As he spoke he picked up his spear of chontawood, which stood at the door of the hut, and slinging a bandaqueras, or blow-pipe—made of small palm, which, when the pith is removed, leaves a polished bore ten feet long—upon his shoulder, he began to search for Raymond's trail.

The blow-pipe of the South American Indians is a peculiar weapon, and one that they use with surprising skill.

The "pipe" is provided with a polished bone mouth-piece, and through the pipe they blow slender arrows with a perfection of aim and force most wonderful.

The "silent" gun of the Andean Indians is their most formidable weapon in the hunt.

Birds are slain on the wing. Monkeys, as they leap from limb to limb in the tops of tall trees, and the llama and boar, also find it impossible to avoid the swift and silent death dealt by the blow-gun.

Loja was surprised to discover that Raymond's tracks plainly evidenced that he had reached the hut, and then proceeded towards the western side of the valley, in the direction in which they had trailed the mysterious visitant of the night.

The hatchet was gone from the hut, and Loja naturally concluded that Raymond had likely taken it away with him.

As the Indian and Ham followed the course which Raymond had traversed, they wondered why he had gone that way, but neither of them could imagine the reason for his eccentric procedure.

Leaving Ham and the Indian following Raymond's trail, let us see what really befell him.

When he reached the hut and procured the hatchet, he was about to return to the forest in the center of the valley, where he had left Loja and the darkey, when he heard a sound in the bushes near at hand, and the next moment a human form, that of the monk whom he had seen on the summit of the cliff, appeared.

The monk was a wild-looking old man, and his long hair and tangled beard were as white as snow.

His clothing was in tatters, and the crooked staff in his hand was covered with knots of dirty ribbon that had once been bright and gay.

At the sight of Raymond the strange old monk uttered a wild cry and darted away.

He was frightened.

He ran like a deer, despite his age, and Raymond found it very difficult to keep him in sight.

Near the cliff-wall, at the western side of the valley, the mysterious one plunged into a thicket and vanished from Raymond's sight.

Unhesitatingly, Raymond followed.

The youth a moment later found himself at the base of a natural, rocky stairs, which led upward.

A wild, glad hope arose in his heart, and he fancied that he had discovered a way out of the hidden valley.

Up—up the rocky stairs he toiled.

It was a tedious climb.

The mysterious monk had vanished, but Raymond doubted not he had traversed the stairs which wound around a projecting ledge that might conceal him from the young American's sight as he made his way upward.

The thought that the hour of escape was at hand nerved and filled Raymond with joy.

After he had proceeded some distance along the rocky stairs which he and his companions had failed to discover, he came upon a projecting ledge, with a cavern of small dimensions beyond it.

Raymond had scarcely reached the ledge, when, with a terrific flapping of wings and a scream of anger, a female condor of great size rushed from the cavern and flew at him.

The king vulture of the Andes, as the condor is called, as we have previously stated, becomes a desperate and dangerous creature when its nest is intruded upon.

Raymond had unwittingly come upon the nest of the great bird. He had left his gun at the base of the cliff, and he was now only with the hatchet in his belt and a knife.

But it seemed that these weapons were to avail him nothing, for the sudden and unexpected attack of the giant bird threw him off his feet, and the mammoth vulture fixed his claws in his back, tearing his clothing, and striving to rend him with his sharp beak.

It was a moment of great peril for Raymond.

The youth struggled desperately.

The great bird beat its wings, and uttered its shrill cry as it fought.

Shielding his face with his arm, Raymond loosened the hatchet in his belt, and made a pass at the condor.

But the bird recoiled and the blow fell short.

With its twelve-foot spread of widely waving wings, a blow from which would easily knock down a man, the condor again dashed at Raymond with neck outstretched and talons bent ready to seize him.

Raymond was knocked flat, and then, as the vulture fell upon him with beak and claws, a rough-and-tumble contest ensued.

Raymond's clothing was torn to rags, and the blood streamed from numerous flesh wounds inflicted by the talons of the fierce bird.

But the youth's feathered assailant had not escaped uninjured.

Raymond had inflicted some serious wounds upon it, and now becoming desperate, he suddenly assumed the de-

fensive, and fell upon the condor with a knife in one hand and his hatchet in the other.

Heedless of the injuries which he might himself receive, Raymond cut and thrust, and his knife reaching a vital part of the great bird, it toppled over the edge of the cliff, and with a scream, sank through the air, wildly beating its wings, and fell dead.

The young American was utterly exhausted.

He sank panting upon the ledge.

He fancied all the danger was over now.

But he was wrong.

A new peril menaced him.

The male condor—the mate of the one he had slain—was swooping down upon him, called by the screams of his mate.

The male condor was larger and more to be dreaded than the female.

The whir of wings as the male condor shot downwards towards the ledge warned Raymond of his coming at last, and he staggered to his feet.

At the same instant the condor struck him, knocking the knife from his hand and almost hurling him over the side of the cliff.

Sinking upon one knee, Raymond strove to clutch the condor by the throat, but in vain.

The wily old bird was certainly not to be caught that way.

Dashing at Raymond, first from one side and then from another, he forced him nearer and nearer the edge of the cliff.

Raymond felt that his strength was failing.

He knew he could not long continue the contest.

The condor seemed to become more and more enraged and vicious as the conflict progressed.

Raymond shouted for his friends, though he had no hope that they would hear him, for he supposed they were away in the woods at the center of the valley.

The youth knew that he could not hold out much longer, and the fate that menaced him now filled him with terror.

To be rent and torn by a condor—to have his eyes plucked out from their sockets and his flesh lacerated—to meet a horrible death—this was what seemed to menace Raymond.

No wonder he shrieked again and again:

"Help! Help! Help!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BLOW-GUN.

Meanwhile Loja and Ham, ignorant of the peril which Raymond had encountered, but anxious as to his welfare, were approaching the cliff.

They heard Raymond's voice.

"Gorry! Hurry up! Dat's Mars Raymond hollerin' fo' help. 'Spec' de spooks hab tackled him," cried Ham.

As he spoke he dashed forward, and Loja also increased his speed.

The Indian wondered what had befallen Raymond.

The scream of the condor reached his ears.

He instantly suspected the truth.

"The condors have attacked Raymond, I think. Perhaps he has stumbled upon the nest of one of those birds. I suspected they had nested hereabouts," said Loja.

In a moment or two they sighted Raymond.

The sight was a thrilling one. Upon the very edge of a shelf-like projection in the cliff, at an elevation of a hundred feet, while above and below the steep wall extended, Raymond was struggling with the gigantic condor.

Loja sank upon one knee and unstrung his blow-gun.

Placing one of the long, slender needle-pointed arrows in the blow-gun, he took a steady aim.

"Be keerful dar, Mr. Indian. Be keerful yah don't kill Mars Raymond instead ob de big bird," said Ham, in his anxiety regarding his master's safety.

"I will not hit Raymond. Loja is a master of the blow-gun," the Indian answered.

The next moment the tiny but fatal missile sped on its way.

It struck the condor.

The great bird settled back on the rock, uttering shrill screams.

But the condor was not fatally shot yet; the arrow had failed to reach a vital part.

Ham shouted:

"Here we is! Here we is, Mars Raymond! We hab come to save yer!"

Raymond saw his friends.

As the condor seemed about to attack him again, Loja discharged a second arrow.

This time the condor's heart was reached.

The great bird fell upon its back, kicking and beating its broad wings violently in the agony of death.

Loja uttered a triumphant shout.

Ham echoed it.

Then they rushed forward.

They ascended the rude stairs.

In a moment they reached Raymond.

The young American told them how he came to be on the cliff-side.

Loja and Ham followed the shelf-like ledge to the point where the monk had been lost to Raymond's view.

At this point the ledge terminated in the abrupt face of the cliff, which no human being could climb, and the secret of the monk's remarkable disappearance remained as much of a mystery as ever.

Our friends examined the rocks with the most careful scrutiny, but they could find nothing to explain the miraculous disappearance of the stranger, search as they might.

The Indian assisted Raymond down the rocks, and having bathed him in cold water, he and Ham rubbed into his wounds a kind of oil which the native carried in a small gourd suspended about his neck.

Loja assured Raymond that this oil would cause his wounds to heal quickly, and the result favorably demonstrated the virtues of the Indian's medical treatment.

Leaving Raymond at the hut, with a revolver in his hand so that he could defend himself if necessary, the Indian and Ham returned to the rock in the center of the valley.

"According to my reading of the map of the ancient Incas, we should find treasures buried here," said Loja, as he and Ham, with the assistance of poles, pried up the great stone.

When they had recovered it a dark layer of earth alone was exposed.

"Whar dat treasure?" said the darkey, in a tone of disappointment, while his protruding eyes and expectant expression told he expected to feast his eyes upon gold and jewels the moment the stone was removed.

"We shall dig here," said Loja, after consulting the map.

They set to work at once, and in half an hour they came upon a metallic chest.

The Indian succeeded in opening it, and as its dazzling contents—gold, diamonds and precious stones—were revealed, Ham uttered a cry of delight.

"Gorry, dar's a heap welf of jewelry dar. I s'pec's dat you wants me and Mars Raymond to go in shares wid yah in dat find, don't yer?" he asked.

"I shall share the treasure with Raymond if he will take a share of it, and he can give you what he may see fit," said Loja.

Having carefully restored the rock to its place, and leaving the buried treasure undisturbed, the Indian and his companion returned to Raymond.

Ham and the Indian found the young American as they had left him, and they told him of the finding of the buried treasure.

"I am now convinced that the part of the ancient writing of my race which I have not yet been able to read, will tell us the way out of this hidden valley. I shall devote all my time to the study of the map," said Loja.

That night, about the midnight hour, Raymond and Ham were awakened by a scream from the Indian.

They started up.

Each grasped a weapon.

By the light of the moon they saw Loja pacing about like one frantic with despair.

"What is it?"

"What de matter, eah?"

These questions were put by Ham and Raymond.

"The map is gone. When I went to sleep I had it safe in my bosom. It has been stolen while I slept!" cried Loja.

"Stolen!" cried Raymond.

"Thief, heah!" exclaimed Ham.

"Yes; and a cunning thief, too," said Loja.

"Can it be the monk whom we have seen?" said Raymond.

"Yes; I can suspect no other. But I am not a heavy sleeper, and I cannot divine how he could have robbed me successfully," said Loja.

As he spoke the Indian beat his breast, and continued his wild walk.

"I detect a strange odor," said Raymond, sniffing the air as he spoke.

"So do I! Bah! him smell worse dan cologne!" said Ham.

Loja paused in his walk and inhaled the air, for in his excitement he had not detected the strange odor which had at once attracted the notice of the others.

"Ha! Now I understand it. The thief drugged me—caused me to inhale a drug which produces profound sleep," said Loja.

"But what could be the motive he had in mind? Why steal the ancient map of the Incas, which no man save yourself can read?" said Raymond.

"Do you remember when I told you of the map?" said Loja.

"Yes."

"If I did not do so, I should have told you that Cuino obtained it from a monk."

"I believe you did."

"Well, Cuino knocked the man senseless, but he may have recovered."

"Yes."

The stranger whose conduct has puzzled us, and who knows the secret way into this valley and out of it, may be the very monk from whom Cuino stole the map. From it he may have learned the secret way into the valley, for it is by no means impossible that he may have deciphered some of the contents of the map. Patient toil will accomplish much, and who knows how much time and study the monk may have devoted to the reading of the map before it fell into the hands of Cuino."

Thus said Loja.

"It may be as you say. At all events, without the map we are powerless. We have slain the condors, and there is no longer hope that the proper reading of the map may show us the way of escape," replied Raymond.

The young cliff climber was despairing.

Loja buried his face in his hands, overcome with despondency.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RAYMOND MEETS WITH AN ADVENTURE.

The time went by, and after this, although they tried many experiments, every effort on the part of our friends to scale the cliffs failed.

Three months elapsed.

Still no hope.

Occasionally they saw the mysterious monk, but, with almost supernatural cunning, he foiled the imprisoned ones' attempts to detect the way he got into and out of the valley.

Loja and his friends moved the buried treasure so that the possession of the map would do the mysterious monk no good if he did succeed in reading it aright.

By night this was accomplished, and the treasure was buried in another part of the valley.

One day Raymond wandered off alone, with his rifle, intent upon whiling away the time by shooting some game.

The youth followed a black boar into the jungle, and so intent was he upon the chase that he did not observe that the animal was leading him into a shallow lakelet until he found himself half-way across it.

The boar swam.

Raymond waded.

Suddenly the bed of the lake sank beneath his feet.

The next moment, as he attempted to proceed, he discovered that he could not do so.

His feet were held as firmly as though unseen hands had grasped and pulled him down.

Further, he was sinking.

Gradually but surely he was going down, each moment deeper and deeper.

There was no way to prevent this.

Raymond struggled.

His efforts were in vain.

An invisible force drew him down.

The truth flashed upon him.

"I am caught in a quicksand!" he exclaimed.

Such was the fact.

The fatal sands had clasped him with a grip they would never relax until they closed over him forever, unless assistance came.

Raymond shouted.

He called for help.

His voice became hoarse.

Still no assistance came.

The water was up to his waist now.

At that moment he bethought himself of a rude lasso which he had wound about him.

There was a pile of rugged rocks at a little distance, but beyond his reach.

He thought if he could throw his lasso over the rocks he might sustain himself until he was discovered by his friends.

Having made the end fast under his arm, Raymond threw the noose.

It fell short of the rocks, which rose abruptly from the water.

Again he tried.

It was his only hope.

Failure was the result of the second cast of the noose.

Raymond tried again. This time the noose caught, and when he had sunk down into the quicksand until the line became taught, he had the satisfaction of seeing that his further descent was checked.

But he was utterly powerless to extricate himself.

He must remain there until he was discovered by his friends.

If they failed to find him, he would perish gradually of starvation.

From time to time, all that day, Raymond continued to shout for assistance, but no answer came back to him.

"My friends will miss me, and institute a search for me if I do not return by night," Raymond said to himself.

That thought sustained him.

He was right.

When night came and Raymond failed to appear, Loja and Ham set out to search for him.

The Indian soon struck his trail.

Followed up, it led Raymond's friends to the treacherous quicksands which had caught him in their relentless toils.

The Indian and Ham were not long in rescuing the imperiled youth from the quicksands, and then they all returned to the hut.

That night, as Raymond lay awake for a long time, as was his wont, reflecting upon the situation in which Providence had seen fit to place him and his companions, he thought and thought until his brain whirled, striving to devise some new plan which might avail to secure their escape.

At last an expedient that had not entered his mind before, and which might possibly prove not to be altogether without results, occurred to him, and in the morning he resolved to put it to the test.

When day came Raymond told Ham and the Indian of his plan.

"If the mysterious monk had any human feeling he would have taken pity upon us long ago, and showed us the secret way out of this valley," said Raymond.

"That is quite true," assented Loja.

"It has occurred to me that, although he is destitute of pity or human sympathy, we can, perhaps, buy his assistance."

"How do you mean?" asked Loja.

"If you are willing, as I fancy you will be, why not offer to share the treasures of the Incas with the mysterious monk, if he will show us the way out of the valley."

"I should be only too willing to do that."

"Would you?"

"Yes, yes. But how are we to open negotiations with him?" asked Loja.

"Leave that to me. I'll write the monk a letter."

"A letter!"

"Yes."

"I fancy you'll not find it easy to deliver it."

"Glory hallelujah! Dis yere are business. 'Course de ole monk show us how to git out ob dis, if you gib him all dem dimings an' stuns and gold and sich. Lord! I'll

see my ole Aunt Chlee in New York once more, maybe, after all!" cried Ham, who had heard all, and was delighted at this new prospect of escape.

"Do not be too sanguine, Ham. We are by no means sure of the result. We may be disappointed once more. However, we'll look on the bright side, and I'll at once write the letter to the mysterious monk," said Raymond.

He had a pencil and paper—the latter was a leaf torn from his pocket-diary.

Hurriedly he wrote the letter to the monk.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### CONCLUSION.

Having completed the letter to the monk, Raymond read it aloud as follows:

"A Hidden Valley, Surrounded by Cliffs, in the Andes.

"I, Raymond Anderson, in behalf of Loja, a descendant of the ancient Incas, who, with my colored man, are prisoners in this valley with me, do hereby offer the finder of this one-half the immense treasures of the ancients, which we have discovered here, if he will show us the way out of the valley.

"We all swear that this is written in good faith, and we will positively share the treasures with our deliverer.

"(Signed), RAYMOND ANDERSON,

"In behalf of himself and the others."

Loja signified his approval.

So did Ham.

"Now I shall fasten this paper to one of our blankets, and hang it up on the side of the cliff, where, sooner or later, the mysterious monk will be sure to find it," Raymond said.

"A good idea!" cried Loja.

"An' when we took notice dat de paper am gone we kin reckon de letter hab been delivered, eh?" said Ham.

"Certainly," assented Raymond.

Without loss of time they proceeded to place the letter on rocks.

A conspicuous place was selected, and the blanket, with the letter secured in its center, was hung against the rocks, where it could scarcely fail to be seen by him for whom the letter was intended.

With anxiety our friends awaited the result.

The day passed, and also the following night.

Our adventurers did not go near the place where they had left the letter until the next morning.

Then they visited it.

The letter was still there.

Another night passed.

Still the letter was not removed.

Ham began to get impatient.

"Dat ole monk don't oughter git no letter. He don't go to de post-office reg'lar, dat's evident," the darkey said.

The third night passed.

The following morning the three friends again visited the spot where they had left the letter.

It was gone at last.

"Whoop! Whoop! De ole monk done been here sure, at las'. Gorry, I wonder how long afore he'll come round to get de treasure?" cried Ham.

That day was one of anxious waiting.

The three friends remained about the hut all day, but the monk did not appear.

The second day, however, just at sunrise, as the prisoners of the hidden valley came out of the hut, the mysterious monk strode forth from a thicket and approached, holding Raymond's letter in his hand.

"You wrote this?" he demanded abruptly.

"Yes; and we mean every word of it," answered Raymond.

"Then give me the gold—the gold of which I have dreamt for years. The gold for which I spent years, studying the mysterious map of which the Spaniard robbed me in a hut on the mountain, and which was given me by a dying Indian years ago. Ha! ha! ha! I stole the map back—

I stole it, for it was mine! Mine, I say, by the right of gift. Ho! ho! ho! I'll be the gold king of the Andes, and you shall be my subjects. I'll build a city in this hidden valley, and it shall rival the splendors of the ancient Incas. They say I am mad—gold mad. Well, well, perhaps I am mad, but I'll show you the way out of this valley, and put you on the trail leading to Cerro de Pasco, if you will show me the treasure and give to me one-half of it, as this letter promises."

The monk paused.

It was clear that he was indeed the man from whom Garcia Cuino had stolen the map.

Equally certain was it that he was mad.

"We are ready to fulfil our part of the contract; come with us and you shall see the treasure," said Raymond.

"Lead on, lead on; I am in readiness," said the monk.

Raymond led the way to the spot where the treasure was buried, and the immense amount of gold and jewels was exposed to the monk.

He fell upon his knees and clapped his hands in childish delight.

"At last! at last, the treasure is before me!" he cried.

"And half of it is yours. Now lead us from the valley and to Cerro de Pasco, and then we will return in company and divide it equally," said Raymond.

"I'll do it: I have the paper to prove the agreement, and I'll hold you to it," said the monk, while a cunning look came upon his face.

He arose and led the way to a sheet of water at the edge of the cliff, not far from where he had usually disappeared.

"At the bottom of the bank is the entrance to a cave, which runs back through the rocks through the cliff," said the monk.

"Follow me and fear nothing," he added.

The monk plunged into the water and disappeared.

Our friends followed him, and beneath the surface they found the entrance to a cave.

They entered it and found the monk awaiting them.

He led them through the cave, and they finally emerged to the light of day.

To this trail leading to the silver mines of Cerro de Pasco the monk conducted them, and they reached Cerro de Pasco in safety.

They were received as though they had arisen from the grave, and the joy of Raymond's uncle can better be imagined then described.

Next day they returned to the hidden valley, accompanied by the mad monk and a mule train.

On the way the monk suddenly fell dead.

It came out afterward that he had long suffered from heart disease, which is prevalent on the Andes owing to the rarity of the atmosphere, and as he had been a devout member of the order of monks occupying the monastery, he was by them interred.

Raymond learned that the old monk had been insane for years, and during that time he had roamed the mountains searching for the hidden treasure of the Incas.

The young American and his friends removed the treasure from the valley, and Loja became one of the richest men in the country, while the present that he forced Raymond to receive was in itself a fortune.

When Raymond and Ham returned to the United States, as they soon did, the young cliff climber took with him the present of the Indian, who had been his fellow captive in the hidden valley of the Andes.

You may be sure Ham was not forgotten, and to-day he is the proprietor of the finest barber-shop in his native city New Orleans.

THE END.

Read "THE OURANG-OUTANG HUNTERS; or, ADVENTURES IN THE DARK CONTINENT," which will be the next number (29) of "All Around Weekly."

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# THRILLING ADVENTURE WITH A BEAR

Warren Wainwright, secretary of the new Morris Powder Company, with his left forearm bandaged and several prominent scratches on his face, said to a reporter:

'I am no hunter, but I went up to Pike County, Pa., with a party of friends the other day just for the novelty of the thing. They were after deer. We went to Stroudsburgh, and then drove thirty miles up in the mountains, and put up in an old log cabin in the woods. They told me we were in Porter Township, where they cast fourteen votes when they get the voters all out. It was night when we got there, and after my friends cooked supper we went to bed. The bed was a bundle of straw to lie on, with a blanket to cover yourself up with. My friends told me if I heard any noise outside during the night to not mind it, as it wouldn't likely be anything but a catamount trying to get in after something to eat. This made me sleep splendidly, of course, and I heard catamounts all night.

"Next day the boys went out to get a deed. I went out, too. I had a double-barreled muzzle-loading gun. They stood me up against a tree about three miles from the cabin, and told me that was a runway, and that pretty soon they would very likely drive a deer off the ridge, and it might come my way, and if it did I must give it both barrels behind the shoulder. I stood there an hour or so, and no deer came along. I got cold and built a fire, stood my gun up against a tree, and laid down on the moss to take a smoke. While I laid there I heard the dogs barking, and looking up, saw a calf coming along toward me as tight as it could run. I wondered where the deuce a calf could come from around there, and watched it as it went by me not more than twenty feet away. I suppose that calf had maybe got a mile or so away before it began to open on to me that it was a deer, and then I felt a little streaked, and made up my mind to make a break for the cabin, and tell the other boys when they got in that I was taken sick and couldn't stand it on the runway any longer.

"The idea that I couldn't walk straight to the cabin never entered my head, and if it had I would have laughed at it. 'The cabin's right over there,' I said to myself, and off I started for it. I walked a good ways, and finally came plumb up against a pile of rocks more than a hundred feet high, and extending along the face of the country as far as I could see. I backed out of that and turned off to the right. I failed to run across any familiar landmarks, and the first thing I knew I went kersouse into a swamp hole up to my waist. It took me about half an hour to pull myself out of the muck, and then I turned off to the left, and found the going so easy that I felt I couldn't be more than a few steps away from the cabin. Well, my friend, when night began to fall I was walking yet. I don't know how much of Porter Township I covered that day, but if I didn't take it all in it must be bigger than some States. I sat down on a rock and expressed my opinion of deer hunting in plain, unvarnished English.

"I was wet and cold, and had used up all my matches in lighting my pipe. I had resigned myself to my fate, whether it might be death by exposure, bears, or catamounts, when I heard some one shout my name, off to my right. I answered, and started on a run in the direction of the sound. I hadn't gone twenty feet when I came plumb out on the spot where the cabin was. The boys had just got in and missed me. They had a deer, and so I didn't say anything about the one I didn't get.

"The next morning I was so stiff I could scarcely move, and I made up my mind to lay low in the cabin all day. The others went out to get another deer. Along in the afternoon I felt better, and concluded that I would go out and pass the time by shooting at a mark. I went off in the woods a hundred yards or so, and putting a piece of paper on a tree, walked a short distance and blazed away at it. The report was followed by what I thought were twenty different peals of thunder, and then I heard some one shout:

"'Say, there! What are you doing?'

"I looked in the direction of the voice and saw a big double-fisted backwoodsman. He came tearing toward me, shaking his fist and swearing at the top of his voice. He came up to where I stood, and holding his fist under my nose, yelled:

"'D'ye know what I've a notion to do? I've a notion to smash the life out o' you! Who ye shootin' at?'

"It seems that the agitated gentleman had been hunting pheasants. He had marked down a flock of 'em, and was creeping along for a shot, when my gun went off. I missed the mark, but my bullet whizzed within two inches of his ear, and away went the pheasants. He wouldn't accept any apology, and I made up my mind that I was in for a regular backwoods dressing out. We edged along toward the cabin. The stranger saw the deer lying by the door.

"'There,' says he, 'that buck'll jist make up fur the game you skeert away from me. I either take that buck and that gun o' yourn, or else you gimme ten dollars.'

"Of course it wouldn't do for me to let the buck go, and the gun was out of the question, so I handed over a ten-dollar note to the injured gentleman, and he walked away, first telling me, with expressive expletives, to be 'more keerful next time' when I was 'bangin' around' where other folks 'was shootin'.'

"This episode added to the pleasure of my deer hunt. I was extremely happy. I went in the cabin and lay down. I fell asleep, and was awakened by a noise. Rising up on my elbow, I looked toward the door and was just in time to see a huge brute that I knew was a bear coolly walking away with the carcass of our deer. I don't know whatever impelled me, but I felt that this was a desperate case and required desperate treatment. I seized my gun and a big butcher knife that belonged to the camp kit, and started in pursuit of the bear. It could not make much headway with its burden, and I soon came within a few feet of it. I pulled up to fire, and then saw that I had left my ramrod in the buckshot barrel, the only barrel that was loaded. I didn't stop to take it out, but whanged away with it in. The charge, or at least the ramrod part of it, struck the bear on the back, and passed through the thick hide and stuck there. The recoil from the gun almost knocked me over. The bear dropped the deer, and with a howl the like of which I never want to hear again, turned and rushed back at me. I thought my time now surely come.

"I could not move. I raised the big butcher knife mechanically, and held my left arm in front of my breast. The bear seized my left arm in his jaws, and at the same time I slashed at him with the knife. It cut one of his ears off as slick as a razor could cut a hair. The bear dropped to the ground, taking my coat sleeve and two or three inches of my flesh. The loss of the ear seemed to daze him. He whirled around two or three times, shaking his head and howling, and dashed off into the woods, and I could hear him tearing away through the brush for several minutes. When the bear disappeared I flunked entirely. I just wilted down on the ground, and couldn't move for ten minutes. Then I got back to the cabin and bound up my arm, and then brought the buck back and put it in a safe place. The boys brought in another deer that night, but I scared 'em when I told 'em of my day's experience, and we packed up and pulled for home."

# ALL AROUND WEEKLY

NEW YORK, MAY 6, 1910.

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## CHOICE READING MATTER.

By employing woodsmen to track the animals on snowshoes the Government of Nova Scotia hopes within the present month to secure twenty fine New Brunswick deer to transplant into the peninsula for breeding purposes. Permission to run down the deer has just been granted by the New Brunswick Government. Some years ago this same privilege was given by the old Government, but the whole lot were not secured. Those which were driven over are found to have increased in numbers very satisfactorily. New Brunswick sportsmen are glad to see the deer thinned out, even to this small extent, for the deer are blamed for the practical extermination of the caribou, with which they carry on a perpetual feud, killing some in fights and frightening the survivors to new haunts through their immensely greater numerical strength.

Education is under the French mother's constant supervision. The Bible is never put into a child's hands. Spiritual history is very much looked into, and no story is told in the works reserved for the young that would imply that any of the kings of Judea had ever been guilty of the slightest indiscretion. The expurgation of profane history is still more complete, and the average French girl grows up with no idea that any scandal ever occurred in the days of the Bourbon kings. As the "jeune fille" advances in years she may have professors of history, Latin, dancing or music, but no carefully brought-up girl is ever left alone with a professor. If she wishes to pass examinations and has to attend courses of lectures, she is always accompanied by her governess, who is bound to report if anything in any shape or form bordering upon impropriety has been said. When, therefore, a French girl first goes into the world she knows very little.

Strange as it may seem, an ant has at least six ears. Aside from their multiplicity they are located in just about the queerest place possible—on the legs. They seem deaf to all sounds made by the vibration of the air, but detect the slightest possible vibrations of solid material. This is supposed to be to their advantage, in that such things as approaching footsteps tell more of the possibility of danger than such sounds as are transmitted through the air. So sensitive are their feet that they detect the impact of a small birdshot dropped on the table from a height of about six inches and about fourteen feet distant from an artificial nest placed at the other end of the table. As curious as are their ears, their noses are even more extraordinary. As the ants spend most of their time in the dark, they must depend largely on scent for their guidance, and in consequence have quite an elaborate array of noses, each for a special purpose. Miss Adele Field believes that their antennæ are composed of a number of noses strung along in a line. Still more strange is the fact that each of these noses can smell only a special thing. The nose on the tip or first joint of the antenna, it is said, is for recognizing the odor of the home; the one on the second joint is to recognize relatives. The third nose is the pathfinder, and without it the poor ant cannot follow a trail, and soon gets hopelessly lost. The noses on the fourth and fifth joints are for recognizing the eggs and immature ants in the nest. No creature is more tidy than an ant, who cannot tolerate the presence of dirt on her body. These little creatures actually use a number of real toilet articles in keeping themselves clean. No less an authority than Dr. McCook says their toilet articles consist of coarse and fine toothed combs, hair brushes, sponges and even washes and soap. Their saliva is their liquid soap, and their soft tongues are their sponges. Their combs, like their ears, are fastened to their legs. They stop for a hasty clean-up when they get dirty. But a more leisurely toilet is made when they feel in a loafing mood, and they then lend a helping hand to one another in the process.

## RIB TICKLERS.

"Does this car go to Twenty-fourth Street?" inquired the elderly lady. "No, ma'am; but I've something just as good," replied the conductor, who was formerly a drug clerk. "I can let you off at Twelfth Street."

"Can't you help me, sir?" asked the beggar on the street of the passerby. "I don't know where my next meal is coming from." "Neither do I," said the man addressed, passing on. "Our girl left this morning, too."

New Neighbor (in Chicago)—Good-morning, my little dear, I saw you out walking with a very fine-looking gentleman last evening. Is he your papa? Little Girl—Yessir; an' he's one of the nicest papas I ever had.

Billiken—What's the matter, Williken? Williken—Matter enough. You know, some time ago I assigned all my property to my wife to —to keep it out of the hands of—of people I owe, you know. Billiken—Yes. Williken—Well, she's taken the money and gone off—says she won't live with me because I swindled my creditors.

Lady—I wish you would call at the office of Mr. Oldrich, 999 Fashion Avenue, contrive to have some conversation with the venerable gentleman, and, so far as you are able, examine into his physical condition. I desire to know how long he is likely to live. Physician—Certainly. Are you his wife? Lady—No; but I have a chance to be.

An aspiring mother of West Philadelphia one evening recently took her daughter aside for a confidential talk. "Margaret," she said, "Mr. Blank has been calling here very frequently of late. What are his intentions, do you know?" "No, mother, I do not," replied the daughter. "Well, I do not think it quite conventional to have him call so frequently. Do you mean to say he has never proposed to you?" "Well, not exactly," replied the girl, "but he did propose that Johnnie be absent the next time he called."

# A NIGHT IN A TOMB

By Horace Appleton.

"I have a strange story to tell you," said a detective, and being at leisure he went on to relate to me the following narrative:

The authorities of the town of Hempstead, in one of our Middle States, once engaged me to detect a band of grave robbers, ghouls, resurrectionists, or whatever you may choose to call those who steal the bodies of the dead.

For some time the human hyenas had been at work in and about the village of Hempstead, and it was thought that the bodies stolen were taken to a neighboring city and sold to a medical college there.

This particular band of body snatchers were exceedingly shrewd and cunning, and although from time to time tombs were entered, graves dug up, and the bodies of the dead taken away, the utmost vigilance on the part of the local authorities had failed to detect the perpetrators of the crimes.

What was my own chagrin, when, after I had been about Hempstead for nearly two weeks, I had discovered nothing.

Even during the period that I had been at work on the case the resurrectionists had not been idle.

An isolated and lonely cemetery had been visited by the ghouls, and the body of a wealthy gentleman, which had been consigned to the tomb the day before, had been carried away.

His son, Randolph Krocker, and the only heir, a wild young man, but not thought to be bad at heart, was one of the local officials of the place, and one of the men who had engaged me to ferret out the ghouls.

After the discovery of the fact that his own father's body had been stolen from the tomb Randolph Krocker came to me, seemingly very much agitated.

"Mr. Waters," said he, "this cannot go on. We must stop the work of these infernal ghouls. Now, for my part, if you will recover my father's body, uninjured or mutilated in any way, I will pay you the sum of one thousand dollars in clean hard cash. Come, what say you? Will you, for the time being, devote yourself more exclusively to the recovery of my poor father's remains than to the work of detecting the ghouls in general?"

"Certainly I will. Though, in my opinion, in detecting the ghouls I shall reach the end you desire," I said.

I visited the tomb of the Krocker family. It was strongly constructed, and no evidence to show that force had been used in opening the door could be discovered. Moreover, the tomb was locked just as usual when the discovery that Mr. Krocker, Sr.'s remains had been stolen was made.

I arrived at the conclusion that the door had been opened by means of a skeleton key.

As I had failed to gain any clew whatever to the identity of the grave robbers while spying about Hempstead, I determined to visit the nearest city, where the medical college was located, thinking that I might gain a clew to the mysterious grave robbers there.

Of course, the fact of the theft of the remains of Mr. Krocker, Sr., created great excitement in the neighborhood, and the news spread throughout the country, being published in the papers everywhere.

It had in some way become known that I was a detective, and that I was engaged in the attempt to ferret out the miscreants, and I became the subject of ridicule by the local wits.

I therefore determined that the best thing I could do was to give out that I acknowledged myself baffled, and leave. I hoped to throw the grave robbers off their guard and increase my chances of recovering the body and detecting the ghouls.

At the medical college I learned enough to satisfy me fully that the institution purchased bodies without a too careful inquiry about them.

The demonstrator of anatomy, whose duty it is to supply the subjects for the dissecting-room, was a villainous-looking fellow with a cast of countenance that was repellant because of its hard, heartless and cruel expression.

I gained admission to the dissecting-room without much trouble, and saw all the "subjects."

The authorities had adopted a singular way to prevent identification of the bodies brought to the college. Their heads were dipped in vitriol, and thus they were so completely disfigured that no danger could arise from exposing them even to a detective.

For some days I was about the medical school, and I even went so far as to matriculate, pay a small fee, and avow my intention of becoming a disciple of Esculapius. I mingled with the embryo doctors and attended lectures, and particularly those of the professor of anatomy, who usually illustrated his lecture with a human "cadaver."

Despite all this, not a clew to the grave robbers could I get. They kept their secret well.

How bodies reached the college I could not find out, but I suspected there was some secret about the building that I had not as yet solved.

Several nights I watched about the college building until day dawned, but my vigil was all in vain.

I took to shadowing the demonstrator of anatomy, but he was on his guard.

He did nothing to betray himself, if, as I suspected, he was in league with the ghouls.

I was becoming discouraged, when I heard of the death of an old man-servant of Mr. Krocker's, of Hempstead.

I at once hastened back to the village and consulted Mr. Krocker regarding a scheme that had occurred to me, which, if startling, possessed the merit of promising further developments regarding the grave robbers.

It was necessary to take the undertaker into our confidence, for Mr. Krocker had at once assented to my plan. It was very simple. It had been given out that on a certain day the deceased servant would be buried in the Krocker family tomb, in accordance with a provision in the will of young Mr. Krocker's father, who had been much attached to the servant, who had faithfully served him for many years.

Now, instead of burying the servant, I was to take my place in the coffin ostensibly provided for the deceased, and in that coffin I was to be placed in the family tomb of the Krockers.

In the meantime the body of the servant was to be preserved by the undertaker in his own vault, provided for that purpose in his embalming establishment.

I was, to all intents, to be buried alive, but the coffin was provided with small openings, through which air could reach me, which had been specially arranged for my benefit. The lid of the coffin was not secured so tightly but that I could easily throw it off. I was in this way consigned to the tomb.

The tomb in which I was placed was a square room. I was in total darkness. I was, however, provided with a skeleton key, by means of which I could unlock the door of the tomb should I desire to do so.

At about two o'clock in the morning I heard a noise at the door of the tomb, and presently it opened and a lady, robed in black, and possessing a pale face which had once been beautiful, came into the tomb with a lantern in her hand. She was followed by two men, who carried a human body, wrapped in a blanket, between them.

In profound silence they placed the body in the coffin from which the body of Mr. Krocker had been stolen, and then,

without having uttered a word, the mysterious trio quitted the tomb.

They secured the door behind them, and leaping up, I ran to the coffin in which they had deposited the body.

Not long did I have to wait for another incident of the most thrilling adventure of my life.

I raised the lid. The next moment I started back in surprise. The body was that of old Mr. Krocker, which had been stolen. I recognized his face.

I was amazed and dumfounded. It seemed unreasonable that the thieves who had stolen the body should return it. This mystery was yet to be solved under the most startling circumstances.

As I stood looking down upon the face of the dead man by the light of a bit of tallow candle which I had in my pocket when placed in the tomb, I heard the sound of footsteps.

I listened. The sounds drew nearer. I knew that they were coming to the tomb. At once I entered my coffin and replaced the lid.

The door of the tomb was again opened. As before, a skeleton key was used. A bright light appeared. Then four villainous-looking men came in.

"That's the box," said one of them, indicating the coffin in which I lay.

"All right. Let's take this stiff along, box and all. He's only a poor old cuss, about whom there won't be much fuss raised," replied another.

"All O. K., boys. Grab on to the box and hustle her along."

They lifted my coffin and carried me from the tomb, and placed me, coffin and all, in a covered wagon in waiting just outside of the cemetery gate.

The grave robbers leaped into the vehicle and it was driven rapidly away in the direction of the city.

I listened to the conversation of the ghouls.

"What beats me is, who could have stolen that Krocker 'stiff' they made so much fuss about. You know the old man Krocker, who was taken from the very tomb we lifted our 'stiff' of to-night from. None of the gang did that job, and there ain't any outsiders about that I know of in our line," said one.

"Right you are, Nick Kohl. It's a blasted puzzle to me," responded one of the party.

Clearly, from this it would seem that the professional grave robbers had no hand in the robbery of the Krocker tomb, which had preceded that of this night. The mystery deepened. I could not even imagine an explanation for the mysterious stealing and equally mysterious returning of the old man's body.

That some one had an important purpose to serve in removing the body of old Mr. Krocker from the tomb for a time I could not doubt, else why had they taken the trouble and the risk of discovery in accomplishing the work which was necessary?

The wagon continued on rapidly until finally the city was reached, when it turned into an alley and was driven into a barn in the rear of the medical college.

The coffin was lifted out, and the four ghouls carried me in it along a narrow underground passage until they came out into the dissecting-room of the college, where the villainous-looking demonstrator of anatomy was awaiting them. They placed the coffin on the floor.

I grasped a revolver in each hand and silently cocked the weapons.

The cover of the coffin was removed and the demonstrator of anatomy looked down upon me.

I kept my eyes closed and held my breath. The demonstrator seemed to be satisfied, and he paid the ghouls and they took their departure by the same route that they had followed in entering.

"Now to call Pont and Plato and have this new subject's head placed in the vitriol bath," said the demonstrator.

He was starting for the door. I knew that the time had come to reveal myself, for Pont and Plato I knew to be two powerful negroes employed in the dissecting-room, who would think no more of killing a man in that secret place than of taking a drink.

With a sudden bound I leaped from the coffin, and with both revolvers leveled at the demonstrator's head I ordered him to halt.

He promptly obeyed.

"I am a detective, sir, and unless you tell me the names of the band of grave robbers of whom you have been purchasing your subjects of late I shall arrest you," I went on.

The man was frightened, and forthwith told me all. He gave me the names of all the band of grave robbers who had desecrated the cemeteries of Hempstead and vicinity, and then he went on to tell me where these men resided and how I could best arrest them.

In consideration of this I promised to let the demonstrator off, and he escorted me from the college.

Next morning a lady was ushered into my room at the hotel. She was robed in black and closely veiled.

I arose to receive her, when she threw aside the veil that had concealed her features, and I started violently as I beheld the pale face of the woman whom I had seen in the Krocker family tomb.

"My name is Gertrude Gains, sir," said the lady, "and I have come to denounce Randolph Krocker as his father's assassin! I was engaged to Mr. Krocker, Sr., and would have become his wife, for, as you can see, I am well advanced in years, and there was no great disparity in our ages. Randolph opposed our union, and when his father told him that his mind was made up to marry me he swore he would prevent it. Mr. Krocker, Sr., died suddenly before our wedding day, and I suspected foul play. I had the body of my affianced removed from the tomb secretly and an analysis made of the contents of the stomach revealed a deadly poison. Randolph feared he would not inherit all his father's fortune if I became his wife. I request you to arrest him."

This was the substance of the lady's communication, and as she produced a warrant for the arrest of the accused I arrested him that day.

He was brought to trial, and although the evidence was sufficient to convict him, according to my judgment, the jury found him not guilty.

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"Jackrabbits in Kansas are just as numerous as they were the day the first covered wagon moved across it toward the Rocky Mountains," said W. L. McIntyre, of Fredonia, a farmer. "It appears to me they are galloping around in greater numbers than ever. Did you ever try to exterminate a jackrabbit? If you never have you've something to learn about shooting. A jackrabbit's movement starts with a spring in the air. He lands on all fours and the intervening space from the time he jumps and the time he lights is just about nothing, but he covers from ten to fifteen feet with every jump. There's only one way to take 'em alive, and that is to leave the top off a pasture well over night. Next morning there'll be plenty, because a jackrabbit will jump into any kind of a hole that's open. They seem to have a fondness for dried-out wells. They outrun the average dog with ease, but can't beat the greyhound. Shooting them on the run is as difficult as shooting birds on the wing, possibly more difficult. Possibly 25,000 are killed in Kansas every year, and yet they seem just as numerous as ever."

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